



БОРИС СОКОЛОВ



ИСТРЕБЛЁННЫЕ МАРШАЛЫ

Abstract

The new book by B Sokolov tells about the dramatic pages of Soviet history shown through the prism of the fate of the repressed marshals of the Red Army. Its heroes do not need a special introduction, these are marshals Tukhachevsky, Blucher, Yegorov, Kulik, Khudyakov, Beria. The book is intended

for the widest range of readers.
those interested in the Soviet period of modern history

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Boris Sokolov

Exterminated marshals



VASILY BLUKHER

MARSHAL-SOLDIER

Vasily Konstantinovich Blucher, one of the first five Soviet marshals, also became the first holder of the first Soviet order - the Red Banner. In encyclopedias, he is listed as a hero of the Civil War. His other two campaigns, on the Chinese Eastern Railway in 1929 and near Lake Khasan in 1938, as well as a three-year stay in China as a military adviser to the Kuomintang government, are remembered much less frequently. The origin of his surname also causes controversy. During the years of the Civil War, because of her, there were rumors that Blucher was a former German or Austrian officer who was captured and went over to the side of the Reds. When these rumors reached Vasily Konstantinovich, he only chuckled: "I wanted to change my last name, but now it's impossible: it turns out that I come from the famous German family of Bluchers ... It's uncomfortable for me to fight badly with the name Blucher." But about whether the second commander in history with the surname Blucher fought well, there are different opinions. During his lifetime, one of the five "red marshals" was praised to the skies as a true master of military art. Later, other estimates appeared.

Compared with some other Soviet commanders who were repressed in the 30s, for example, Tukhachevsky and Yakir, Vasily Konstantinovich was not considered an outstanding strategist and did not leave any works in the field of military theory and history, limiting himself to a few memoir articles. One of the marshals of the Great Patriotic War, Ivan Stepanovich Konev, who previously served under Blucher in the Far East, in an interview *with* the writer Konstantin Simonov, spoke of the commander of the Special Far Eastern Army in the following way: "By the thirty-seventh year, Blucher was a man with a past, but without a future, a man, who, in terms of the level of his knowledge and ideas, did not go far from the Civil War and belonged to the category that Voroshilov, Budyonny and some other former cavalymen, who lived out of date, past views, represented at the beginning of the war. Imagine that

Blucher would have coped with the front in a modern war, it is impossible. Apparently, he would have coped with this no better than Voroshilov or Budyonny. In any case, Blucher failed such a small operation as the Hassan events. And besides, lately he was generally in a difficult moral state, he drank heavily, he went down. Let's see if Ivan

Stepanovich was right. To do this, we need to trace the entire life path of Blucher, from a small Yaroslavl village to a gloomy Lefortovo cell.

Vasily Konstantinovich was born on November 19/December 1, 1890. For a long time it was believed that he was born in 1889. However, later they found a metric record with a genuine date. It turned out that when the 14-year-old Vasily went to St. Petersburg to work, he attributed a year to himself so that it would be easier to get a job at the factory. The birthplace of the future marshal is the village of Barshchinka, Georgievsk volost, Rybinsk district, Yaroslavl province. There were only sixteen households there. On sandy soils with low agriculture, the harvests were poor, so the peasants moved to large cities, including the capital.

The surname Blucher, according to family legends, appeared among the Yaroslavl peasants in the following way. The great-grandfather of Vasily Konstantinovich Lavrenty fought **with** Napoleon. And he fought well: he returned home all in crosses. The local landowner Nikotpolin Kozhin closely followed the military events. The name of the famous Prussian Field Marshal Gebhard Lebrecht von Blucher, the winner of Napoleon at Waterloo, flashed in the newspapers. His popular prints were even sold in the markets. Do you remember in Nekrasov's "To whom it is good to live in Rus": "When a peasant does not carry Blucher and not my lord stupid, Belinsky and Gogol from the market"? This is just about the first Blucher. When the landowner saw his peasant, who had only slightly fewer awards on his chest than the Prussian commander, he exclaimed admiringly: "Here comes Blucher himself!" And he did not know, of course, that the great-grandson of the one to whom the nickname Blucher was now firmly attached

would also rise to the rank of marshal. Vasily's father, Konstantin Petrovich Blyukher, according to the stories of fellow villagers, was a gloomy man, taciturn. Mother, Anna Vasilievna, nee Medvedeva, was a kind and docile woman. They lived in poverty. The future commander graduated from

parochial school and went to the capital. He started as a servant boy in the St. Petersburg manufactory shop of the merchant Klochkov. Then he became an apprentice locksmith at Berg's Franco-Belgian plant, then, already a locksmith, he changed several jobs until in 1907 he got a job at the Mytishchi Carriage Works, the same one that now produces metro trains. Here, in February 1910, he was arrested for calling for a strike. The Moscow District Court sentenced Blucher to 2 years and 8 months in prison. After serving his sentence in Butyrka prison, Vasily Konstantinovich decided to engage in self-education and entered the evening preparatory courses at the Shanyavsky People's University. And during the day he worked as a mechanic in the workshops of the Moscow-Kazan railway. From here, Blucher was drafted into the army in August 1914. At first he served in the 93rd infantry reserve battalion stationed in the Kremlin, but in the autumn he went to the South-Western Front, where he became a private of the 3rd company of the 19th Kostroma regiment of the 5th infantry division of the 8th army of General A.A. Brusilov. On November 27, 1914, as part of a scout team, Vasily Blucher received a baptism of fire. In the First World War, he fought bravely, but not for long. On January 8, 1915, near Ternopil, on the outskirts of the enemy trenches, the scouts were fired upon with shrapnel. Blucher was badly wounded. His left thigh was shattered, both forearms were injured, and many bullets and shrapnel stuck in his back. Then he never slept on his back - old wounds hurt. Vasily Konstantinovich spent more than a year in hospitals, underwent several operations. As a result, the left leg became one and a half centimeters shorter than the right. For courage and in connection with a severe wound, Blucher was awarded the St. George medal, and then dismissed from the army. In March 1916, ordinary Blucher was transferred by the medical commission of the Main Moscow Military Hospital "to a primitive state with a pension of the first category." After leaving the hospital, Vasily Konstantinovich visited his relatives, and then got a job as a mechanic at the Sormovo shipbuilding plant, but did not stay there for a long time and moved to the Osterman mechanical plant in Kazan. There he became close to the Bolsheviks and in June 1916 joined their party. After the February Revolution in May 1917, he volunteered for the 102nd Reserve Infantry Regiment stationed in Samara to conduct secret anti-war agitation there.

Among the soldiers who were by no means eager for the front, Vasily Konstantinovich was popular. He was elected a member of the regimental committee and a deputy of the city Council of Soldiers' Deputies. After the October Revolution, almost the entire regiment supported the Bolsheviks. In Samara, they took power almost without resistance. But the ataman of the Orenburg Cossack army A.I. Dutov did not recognize Lenin's power. Soviet troops moved against the Cossacks from different provinces, including from Samara. Blucher also went with the Samara detachment against Dutov. Vasily Konstantinovich later recalled how he was summoned by the chairman of the provincial military revolutionary committee V.V. Kuibyshev and announced the appointment of the commissar (in fact, the commander) of the troops sent to deblockade Chelyabinsk. Valeryan Vladimirovich allegedly described the current situation as follows: "We have just received an assignment from the Central Committee from Comrade Lenin and have opted for you. The assignment is extremely responsible. Dutov, having captured Orenburg, cut off Central Asia from the center, now the Dutov detachments surrounded Chelyabinsk and threaten the movement of food trains to the west, to Moscow and Petrograd. And this means that they want to strangle the revolution with hunger. The Central Committee ordered that measures be taken to eliminate the Chelyabinsk traffic jam. Detachments are sent there from other cities. We are ordered to provide at least five hundred people with artillery and carry out this extremely important operation.

Blucher, he said, was hesitant at first. After all, he had never led a battalion or even a squad before. But Kuibyshev reassured: cope, they say, nothing for the Bolshevik

there is no impossible.

The detachment, reinforced by an eight-gun battery, successfully passed to Chelyabinsk, around which in reality there was no ring: the Cossack detachments were too small. With the advent of the Blucher detachment, the Bolshevik Soviet liquidated the Socialist-Revolutionary Menshevik Chelyabinsk Constituent Assembly and took all power in the city. In mid-December 1917, Blucher became the head of the local military revolutionary committee, and on March 8, 1918, he headed the Chelyabinsk Soviet.

In January 1918, about 3.5 thousand Soviet troops were concentrated against Dutov, led by the Bolshevik midshipman S.D.

Pavlov. Earlier, Pavlov's detachment became famous for the fact that in Mogilev he raised the last chief of staff of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, General N.N. Dukhonin. Now the midshipman led the offensive of the Reds from Buzuluk to Orenburg. At the same time, the city was attacked by the Red Guard detachments that came from Tashkent. On January 18/31, Dutov left Orenburg and went to Verkhneural'sk with a detachment of 300 people. Another detachment of Cossacks, numbering up to 600 people, fell back to Uralsk. Blucher, meanwhile, was appointed chief of staff of the Red Guard of the Chelyabinsk region, and on March 8, 1918 he was elected chairman of the Chelyabinsk Soviet. Then, in the spring of the 18th, the Cossack detachments stepped up their operations. At the end of March, Vasily Konstantinovich headed the joint headquarters of the detachments operating against Dutov. On March 25, the Reds occupied Verkhneural'sk, and in mid-April, the chieftain of the Orenburg Cossacks, disbanding most of his troops (about 2,000 people), with a detachment of several hundred officers and Cossacks, went to the Turgai steppes. Blucher's detachment pursued him. On April 23, a clash occurred between them near the village of Brievna, but the ataman managed to save his people and break away from

persecution. About those battles, a sketch from the white camp has also been preserved. The comrade of the chairman of the Military Circle of the Orenburg Cossacks, Colonel Gavriil Vasilyevich Enborisov, in his declining years in Harbin, recalled the battle that took place on April 1 near Kassel, near Verkhneural's, when one of the Soviet detachments was defeated: "The Reds from all sides ran in one heap to forest, from the quarries at 700–800 paces, and formed a huge black spot in the snow with a diameter of 100–150 paces, and I, in order to prevent the enemy from correcting my mistake, immediately used the taken 4 machine guns and 2 of my own against this crowd. They again rushed to run: the scream, the noise, the creak of the sleigh - all this increased the panic, and also our successful shooting did not allow them to recover, so that Blucher

himself barely escaped, hiding in a dung heap on a farm near Mount Imamoeva. Immediately, Enborisov gives an absolutely legendary biography of Blucher: "By the way, it must be said what the famous "Bolshevik commander in chief Blucher is like. This is a deserter from the Austrian army, a Jew by origin, who was sentenced to death by hanging by a cou

mitigated the punishment, replacing it with life imprisonment in a hard labor prison, from which he fled. His name became known from the moment when, after fleeing, he appeared within the Orenburg province in 1918. Blucher hung

around for a long time in the area of the city of Verkhneural'sk, Troitsk, Beloretsk factories, carrying out small assignments, until he sniffed with Kashirin and until the Bolsheviks recognized him as a criminal, and they need the experience of a convict, because a decent person will

not go to the Bolsheviks. I suppose readers laughed heartily at this "anti-life" of the red commander. It is not known, by the way, whether Blucher really participated in that battle near Kassel, but even if he did, he probably did not hide in the dunghill. This story was invented to maintain the spirit of the Cossacks, who then had to leave their native places with battles. Not so, they say, the red devil is terrible, as he is painted. As for the assertion that only dishonorable people can join the Bolsheviks, some claims can be brought against Blucher both as a commander and as a person. One can recall, for example, his role in the conviction of Tukhachevsky and subsequent repressions in the Red Army. But there was cowardice, not dishonesty. In dishonesty, Vasily Konstantinovich seemed not to have been noticed. Blucher himself about the book by G.V. I

heard Enborisov, but never bothered to read it. Already after the Civil War, at a meeting with writers, he stated: "One of the commanders of the Verkhneural'sk Cossack detachment, the former Cossack officer Enborisov, who was well privy to our plans, defected to the Whites. After the Civil War, he fled abroad and wrote an outrageous book about our unit. Here Vasily Konstantinovich clearly confused Colonel Enborisov with his son Nikolai, whom we will talk about ahead. It can be assumed that Blucher heard rumors about both the "dunghill" and the "fugitive Austrian convict", which caused his anger! In early May, a large uprising of Cossacks broke out near Orenburg,

dissatisfied with the land policy of the Soviet government. The rebels, led by Yesaul Lukin, took the city, but they could not hold it and retreated to the steppes. Blucher's Consolidated Ural Detachment moved to help the Soviet troops near Orenburg in 2000

Human. Soon, a detachment of G.V., moving from the Western Front, joined him. Zinoviev, the future commander of the Turkestan army, and several smaller detachments. Blucher's troops inflicted a number of defeats on the Cossacks and on May 23 joined the Orenburg garrison. In the first half of June, they were joined by a detachment of the Kashirin brothers formed in the Beloretsko-Verkhneuralsk region and the Ufa detachment of M.V. Kalmykov. However, the rebellion of the Czechoslovak Corps, which began on May 25, dramatically changed the military-political situation. Already on May 27, the Czechs captured Chelyabinsk. Dutov returned from the Turgai steppes with a detachment of 600 fighters and led the rebels who again laid siege to Orenburg. The detachments of Blucher and the Kashirins retreated to Verkhneuralsk, the Orsk Red Guards to Orsk, and the detachment of Zinoviev returned to Tashkent. As N.E. Kakurin, "the spatiality of the theater, its low saturation with enemy troops allowed them to safely leave the zone covered by the uprising and occupied by the Czechoslovaks, and achieve their goals." Blucher suggested that the entire South Ural grouping of the Reds, numbering about 10.5 thousand bayonets and sabers, join the main forces of the Red Army in the direction of Yekaterinburg through the workers' regions of the Urals. The Kashirin brothers, whose detachment was the most numerous and consisted mainly of Orenburg Cossacks, wanted to move to Yekaterinburg through the Cossack regions - through Verkhneuralsk and Troitsk. Most of the commanders supported them, but later it became clear that this plan turned out to be erroneous. The bulk of the Cossacks were hostile to the Reds, and many soldiers of the Kashirin detachment went home. Blucher agreed to go to Verkhneuralsk so as not to split the forces. But they failed to take the city. I had to retreat to Beloretsk. In these battles, on July 26, Nikolai Kashirin, a former officer who was elected commander in chief of the united detachments, was seriously wounded. The leadership passed to his brother Ivan. Blucher became his first deputy. But this situation lasted only a week. On August 2, in Beloretsk, the commanders gathered for a meeting. One of the participants, Ivan Nedolin (Markelov), left us his description: "Everyone is used to seeing Vasily Konstantinovich Blucher in his invariable shabby leather jacket, in a soldier's cap, and dusty boots. Medium height, strong, brown hair. A chin in the stubble of a beard that is rarely refreshed with a razor. Gray watchful eyes

at times - everyone was convinced of this - they were cast with steel. The jaws and chin betrayed a firm, resolute nature ... An inseparable Mauser in a wooden case, binoculars, a field bag completed the modest outfit of the commander-in-chief of the partisans.

Ivan Kashirin, a favorite of the Cossack poor, popular for his prowess and resourcefulness. Tall and slender, he carried himself with captivating simplicity and brilliance. Blue Cossack officer trousers, high chrome boots. Ivan Dmitrievich wore a simple kosovorotka shirt or tunic in the summer in the heat. A silver belt effectively stood out on it, a curved Cossack checker - also in silver. Revolver. Kashirin grew a reddish beard, and often shaved his head. He was less than thirty, in appearance he was a soul-cavalryman, a grunt and

merry fellow.

Next to Ivan, the elder Kashirin, Nikolai, looked modest. Medium height, brunette, dark-eyed, with a thoughtful, stern face, in the usual suit of a Cossack officer. Nikolay had not yet recovered from his wounds, he walked, leaning on a crutch or on a hussar sword in a metal sheath. Nikolay is a solid Bolshevik, modest, resolute, persistent.

Of the other detachment commanders, the most popular was Nikolai Tomin, the commander of the Trinity Brigade, a former Cossack constable. Tall, stout, with a blond beard, in an old leather jacket, with the same whip in his hand, with a revolver at his waist, binoculars on his chest. Tomin was recently wounded in the arm and did the whole campaign with his arm in a sling. Active, calm and fearless, he was always ahead of the advanced units of the front. It was not known when he rested, so used to seeing him always awake.

And here is a portrait of the same Kashirin brothers, seen from the other side of the front line, through the eyes of Gavriil Vasilyevich Enborisov, already familiar to us: "I am sure that the Kashirins, especially Ivan, are not at all ideological people, but they are simply used to looking at their father, the ataman of the village - for 27 years as a person holding a position and of divine origin, and they, as the heirs of his position, should also be chieftains, also power, but the Bolsheviks do not care, because there is not a single ideological one - just rob the loot. If the Jews had driven the Kashirins out, they would have dragged this whole idea into an office with the inscription "00". Times man

from an ardent monarchist easily flew into revolutionaries, then it is even easier for them to return back, like all flights in general - selfish cowards go for the skin.

Blucher, of course, was more ideological than the Kashirin brothers. Still, a Bolshevik with pre-revolutionary experience, and a worker by profession. It is difficult to imagine him at the head of a regiment or division of the Whites. Although, curiously, the regiments and divisions of the workers were just the most combat-ready troops in Kolchak's army. The commander of one of these divisions, Izhevsk, General Viktorin Mikhailovich Molchanov, the future opponent of Blucher in the Far East, at the end of his long life (and he lived for almost 89 years) recalled: "If in the south of Russia there were Kornilovites, Markovites, Drozdovites, then there there were no such units as Izhevsk, Votkinsk, Mikhailovites, consisting exclusively of workers. And with the Kashirins, Blucher managed to

find a common language. The eldest of the brothers then shared the fate of Vasily Konstantinovich. In August 1937, commander of the 2nd rank Nikolai Dmitrievich Kashirin was arrested, who had tried Tukhachevsky together with Blucher back in June. June 14, 1938 he was shot. The youngest, Ivan, also a commander, was saved from almost inevitable repressions only by an early death. After all, both Kashirins were wayward, independent people, and even Cossack officers in the past.

The plan of Nikolai Kashirin completely failed. Not only the Cossack poor did not join the Reds. but also on the night of August 2, a number of commanders of the Verkhneural'sk detachment from among the officers were Nikolai Enborisov, the son of Gavriil Vasilyevich. Kayukov and others. with part of the Cossacks went over to the whites.

The life of Enborisov Jr. ended tragically. His father wrote in his memoirs: "I can't keep silent about that either. that my eldest son Nikolai, a rather dashing officer, a participant in the German war, who received many shell shocks, wounds and, after being cured, always returned to battle, who received a lot of awards, an ardent opponent of the Soviets, suddenly became Andrei Tarasovich Bulba, that is, he obeyed the woman (wife) and did not fulfill the blessing of his father, went to the Soviets; and after the prodigal son had returned, his father, a sinful man, was not worthy to be a biblical father - he did not call guests and did not set a feast, for when the Motherland is led

to the scaffold. The Bible does not have to be dealt with; as a result, the son was buried in the village of Arsinsky according to the Christian rite. There was still a huge mistake on the part of the Cossacks of the Spasskaya village, but it is not yet time to name them. Nikolai Gavrilovich Enborisov, as noted in the message of the chief of staff of the 2nd division of the Ural White Corps, was "destroyed before the interrogation" and could not provide any information. The

Cossacks were clearly in a hurry. The Kashirin brothers admitted their mistake. Now Vasily Konstantinovich's plan was adopted - to go through the workers' districts. Accordingly, he was given the main command. It must be taken into account that at that time all the commanders were elected and it was not easy to please the partisan freemen and at the same time maintain discipline and firmly implement the planned operational decisions. Blucher

succeeded. Having fought more than a thousand kilometers, the fighters of the Consolidated Ural Detachment of the Kashirins and Blucher on September 12, 1918, joined in the area of the village of Tyuinoye Ozero with units of the 3rd Soviet Army. If we count the path from Orenburg, then it was about 1.5 thousand kilometers. Despite the losses, the strength of the Consolidated Ural Detachment almost did not decrease, since it was constantly replenished with workers from the Ural factories. Lenin became interested in Blucher. At his request, a member of the Ural Regional Committee of the Communist Party A.P. Spunde sent brief information about Vasily Konstantinovich to the chairman of the Council of People's Commissars: "He participated almost all the time in the liquidation of the Dutovshchina. The last time he left Chelyabinsk against Dutov was at the beginning of May under the following circumstances. At that time, he was lying in the infirmary, as a wound had opened, received in the war against the Germans back in the time of Kerensky. At 8 o'clock in the morning, information was received about Dutov, by 10 am Blucher was already at headquarters to organize a speech. It was cut off somewhere in the Orenburg region by the Czechs. Now, having spent about 4 months in the rear of the Czechs (in fact, Blucher's detachment no longer had to fight not with the Czechs, but with the Orenburg Cossacks and the People's Army of Komuch. - **B.S.**), came out to us somewhere near Birska, increasing significantly their troops. At the same time, he did not use the nearest road to Tashkent, but chose a much more difficult one - to the Urals, going across the Samara

The comrades who conducted the last Dutov campaign with him claim that in literally all cases his strategic plans turned out to be absolutely successful. The Ural Regional Committee of the RCP (and, of course, of the Soviets too) insists that Blucher and his detachments be awarded the highest award that we have, because this is an unprecedented case for us.

And on September 30, 1918, when the All-Russian Central Executive Committee established the first Soviet Order of the Red Banner, it was decided to award Blucher this order number 1. "Transition of the troops of Comrade. Blucher in impossible conditions can only be equated with Suvorov's crossings in Switzerland," the All-Russian Central Executive Committee noted at a meeting. On October 14, N.D. was awarded the Order of the Red Banner. Kashirin, and later orders, personalized weapons, silver watches and cigarette cases were received by many fighters and commanders of the Consolidated Ural Detachment. It can

be seen that Vasily Konstantinovich had the talent of a military organizer and commander, since the same Kashirin brothers, officers who had much more experience than him during the First World War, unquestioningly obeyed him.

Blucher's army was merged with the remnants of the 4th Ural Division, which had just been defeated by the Whites near Krasnoufimsk. Vasily Konstantinovich became the head of the division, N.D. Kashirin - his assistant, I.D. Kashirin and N.D. Tomin - brigade commanders. The 4th division liberated Krasnoufimsk on October 2. In the future, she covered the direction to Kurgan. Here, on October 9, a new offensive of the Siberian army, General R. Gaida, began. In the midst of the fighting, Blucher opened old wounds, and he was forced to go to the hospital. On the eve of his departure, the remnants of the neighboring 3rd Ural division, defeated by the Whites, were poured into the 4th division, and the division, whose head Vasily Konstantinovich remained, was renamed the 30th rifle division. Her combat path was later reflected in the popular military song of the 20s:

***From the blue Ural Mountains
To the battles of the Chongar
crossing The 30th
passed forward in flame and glory.***

Blucher returned to the division in December 1918, when the Whites launched a powerful offensive against Perm. After heavy fighting, during which the 1st Kronstadt regiment attached to the 30th division was completely destroyed, the Soviet troops were forced to retreat and leave Perm on December 25. Unlike the neighboring 29th division, which lost all the carts and artillery during the withdrawal from the city, the 30th division retreated in good order. Therefore, Blucher managed to prevent the further advance of the 1st Siberian Corps of General A.N. Pepelyaev to the Pavlovsky and Ochersky factories and throw back the enemy with a counterattack. After this success, Vasily Konstantinovich was made assistant commander of the 3rd Army. The front, meanwhile, stabilized in the Glazov region. The general failure of the actions of the 3rd Army in the battles for Perm was due to the fact that the reserve of replenishment from the Ural workers had already been exhausted, and the mobilized peasants of the Vyatka and Perm provinces were not eager to shed blood for the dictatorship of the proletariat. One of the regiments of the 29th division went over to the Whites, opening the way for them to P

In March 1919, Kolchak's troops launched a new offensive in the Vyatka direction and pushed the 3rd Army behind Glazov. The main blow fell, however, not on the 3rd, but on the 2nd and 5th armies. In the event of an enemy breakthrough, the Red Command decided to create Vyatka, a fortified area, of which Blucher was appointed head on April 3. However, when the construction of the fortifications was completed in the summer, the need for them had already disappeared. By that time, the Red Army had launched a counteroffensive along the entire Eastern Front and liberated Kungur and Perm. Blucher was instructed to form a new, 51st division, with which he moved deep into Siberia to finish off Kolchak. On August 20, 1919, the division crossed the Tobol, then the Irtysh and occupied Tobolsk. However, in September, the Whites launched their last offensive on the Eastern Front and pushed back behind the Tobol parts of the neighboring 5th Army, commanded by Tukhachevsky. The 51st Division was in a difficult position. She had to leave Tobolsk. Blucher's troops were in a semi-circle. However, Vasily Konstantinovich gathered a shock detachment of 200 people and attacked the attackers from the rear. The enemy faltered and retreated, and the Blucherites managed to hold a bridgehead on the eastern bank of the Tobol. The Reds pulled up reserves and went on the offensive. 14 October 5th

again crossed the Tobol, and on November 11, Blucher's division entered the Kolchak capital Omsk. Organized white resistance on the Eastern Front almost ceased. The remnants of the Kolchak troops left for Transbaikalia under the protection of the Japanese and the Cossack army of

Ataman Semenov. Blucher with his division remained in Eastern Siberia until the summer of 1920. In August, she was transferred to Kakhovka to fight Wrangel. The 51st division repulsed all attacks on the Kakhovka bridgehead of the 2nd White Army Corps, which was first commanded by Ya.A. Slashchov, and then V.K. Vitkovsky. By this time, published in 1951 in the New York "New Journal" memoirs about Blucher Dmitry Varetsky, a former employee of the headquarters of the Kakhovskaya group of troops, commanded by R.P. Eideman. Varenyy then had a chance to experience the Gulag, and after the Second World War he settled in the West among the displaced persons. So the memoirist did not have much sympathy for the Soviet system, but he wrote about Blucher with obvious sympathy, no doubt that the marshal died in Stalin's dungeons (although this was not reported anywhere in 1951). This

is how Varetsky saw Vasily Konstantinovich: "Above average height, broad-shouldered, muscular. The military uniform sat on him like a glove, and he seemed almost a dandy. At that time Blucher was driving a brand new Packard. Varetsky remembered the "cup of tea" at Eideman's, which was attended by all the division commanders and staff workers: "We drank Kakhovka red wine, warmed up in the owner's enameled bucket, along with pharmaceutical alcohol prescribed for the sanitary unit for the needs of the headquarters district. Kakhovka's unique watermelons and melons served as an appetizer. The general

conversation, warmed up by "punch," as drinking from a bucket was called, proceeded lively and interestingly. It is difficult now to restore in memory all that was said. They compared the fighting qualities of the Chinese and Russian soldiers (as if Vasily Konstantinovich foresaw that he would later have to deal with the Chinese. - **B.S.**), discussed the industrial prospects of Siberia, argued about trends in poetry, quoted Mayakovsky, made rosy plans for the future, recalled Moscow zucchini and pre-revolutionary bohemia and even sang. In a word, it was more of a student party than a "cup of

tea "respectable chiefs of divisions, managers of the fate of hundreds (rather - tens. - **B.S.**) of thousands of

people." According to Varetsky, Blucher participated in the conversation on an equal footing, often reinforcing his judgments "with references to authoritative sources, whether the matter concerned the merits of Mayakovsky's poetry, the work of the State Duma of the last convocation, Ukrainian folklore, or the peculiarities of the form of regiments of the guards cavalry." At the same time, the opinions of Vasily Konstantinovich "were always serious, accurate and testified to knowledge of the issue. Blucher's interlocutors did not object, did not argue with

him - they immediately turned into only listeners. I note here that there is another evidence of the level of erudition of the former locksmith who became a commander. Mark Isaakovich Kazanin, who worked together with Blucher in China in 1925-1927, and previously studied with his first wife Galina Alexandrovna Kolchugina at the Russian gymnasium in Harbin, says that Blucher did not tolerate when interlocutors, voluntarily or involuntarily, exposed gaps in his education. His adjutant Mazurin "at first sometimes pointed out grammatical flaws to Blucher; Blucher changed his face and lost his self-control. Anyone who, even if by accident, touched on Blucher's weak points - gaps in systematic education, his pride, his pride - in a sense put himself above him, and this was sheer absurdity. One day Kazanin read to Blucher in an English newspaper that the foreign colonies in China were the Hansa of the 20th century. "What else Hansa?" Blucher grumbled angrily. Mark Isaakovich, in order, God forbid, not to offend the pride of the commander, had to pretend that the newspaper further explains: Hansa is a trade union of coastal German cities concluded in the Middle Ages. Kazanin as well as Varetsky. confirmed that Blucher was distinguished by "a somewhat emphasized dapperness, which might seem superfluous to someone who did not know that a courageous and simple person was hiding behind it." It is felt that Vasily Konstantinovich really wanted to stand out among those around him, to be the center of attention, to make himself listen. As for erudition, both Kazanin and Varetsky are obviously right. Blucher was well versed in military affairs, he also knew about the ups and downs of the Duma struggle, which he probably followed in the newspapers. It can be assumed that Mayakovsky

was one of the favorite poets of the head of the 51st division, and the future marshal quoted his poems with pleasure. But with Russian literacy and world history, Vasily Konstantinovich was not very at odds and got angry when this was involuntarily pointed out to him.

But back to Northern Tavria. In October 20, the superior forces of the Red Southern Front under the command of M.V. Frunze defeated the Russian army of Baron Wrangel and pushed it back beyond the Crimean isthmuses. Two brigades of the Blucher division went around the enemy fortifications through the Sivash to the Lithuanian Peninsula, the other two stormed the Turkish Wall in the forehead. Losses were very big. Strictly speaking, there was no great need for a frontal attack on the Perekop fortifications. The Soviet grouping on the Lithuanian Peninsula still threatened them from the rear, and Wrangel did not have sufficient forces to eliminate it, even if he removed all the troops from the Turkish Wall. After all, even according to the Soviet historian N.E. Kakurina, the advantage of the Red Army at that moment was overwhelming: 133,591 bayonets and sabers and about 600 guns against 19,610 bayonets, sabers and 180 guns. In addition, after the retreat to the Crimea, Wrangel was already thinking first of all about evacuation overseas and was not going to defend the isthmus to the last man. Under these conditions, it would only be more expedient to demonstrate preparations for the assault on the Turkish Wall and limit ourselves to artillery shelling of the positions of the Whites, while at the same time strengthening the group that crossed the Sivash to the maximum. However, Frunze decided that in order to facilitate the success of the troops operating on the Lithuanian Peninsula, a full-scale assault on the Turkish Wall was necessary, and Blucher had to continue fruitless attacks. As a result, the Wrangelites, fearing to be cut off from the ports by two divisions advancing from the Lithuanian Peninsula, on the night of November 8-9, they themselves left the Turkish Wall and retreated to the Yushun positions. By the morning of November 10, the four brigades of the 51st Division, reunited under a single command, began to overcome these positions. On this day, the evacuation of the Russian army had already begun, so the rearguards remaining at Yushun were ordered to gradually withdraw, holding back the advance of the Reds with artillery fire and counterattacks of a few cavalry units. On November 11, the 51st division occupied the Yushun station. The enemy stopped counterattacks.

advancing from the Lithuanian peninsula and began to rapidly retreat to the landing ports. The red units were very tired and could not organize the pursuit. On November 12, the command allowed them to have a day's rest, which allowed the Whites to significantly break away from their pursuers. Wrangel, unlike Denikin in Novorossiysk, safely removed his main forces and a large number of civilian refugees from the Crimea - about 146 thousand people in total, of which about 83 thousand were military. In a report on the results of

the battles for Perekop, Blucher wrote: "The task assigned to the division - to break through the road to the Crimea - has been completed. On November 11, at 12 o'clock, the Ishun station (another name is Yushun. - **B.S.**), Crimea is ahead, there are no more fortifications, the best forces of Wrangel are finally defeated: Kornilovites, Drozdovites, Markovites, guardsmen, the second army corps are miserable remnants and run in panic. The army, which represented the pride of Wrangel, was defeated and destroyed. The impregnable Turkish Wall and four lines of the Ishun positions fell. Half-dressed, hungry, tired, the Red Army men and commanders, who continuously participated in all the battles, defeated the army that was only superior in manpower (I hope the reader will appreciate all the humor of this passage if he remembers that Frunze had almost seven times more troops than Wrangel. - **B.S.**), but they also smashed it behind dozens of rows of barbed wire (again, there weren't dozens of rows of barbed wire. - **B.S.**) and countless rows of trenches. Frunze, in turn, reported to Lenin on November 12: "I testify to the highest valor shown by the heroic infantry during the assaults on Sivash and Perekop. Units marched along narrow passages under deadly fire at the enemy's wire. Our losses are extremely heavy. Some divisions lost three-quarters of their strength. The total loss of killed and wounded during the assaults on the isthmuses is at least 10 thousand people. The armies of the front fulfilled their duty to the Republic. The last nest of the Russian counter-revolution has been destroyed." Whites also suffered considerable losses in these battles. In the Drozdov division alone, there were about 700 killed and wounded, and the remnants of one of the battalions went over to the side of the Reds. Division commander General A.V. Turkul recalled the last counterattack of the Drozdovites: "For the last time, like lightning, the Drozdovites crashed into the piles of Bolsheviks. The counterattack was

swift, that the enemy, who already sensed our defeat, knew of his victory under the blow of Drozdov's lightning, stopped, swayed, and suddenly rolled back. The chains of the Reds, knocking together, rolling on each other, receded under our attack, when we, the White Guards, in our last battle, as in the first, rifles on a belt, with extinguished cigarettes in our teeth, silently walked at full height towards the machine guns. The Drozdovsky regiment in the last attack near Perekop overturned the Reds, took up to one and a half thousand prisoners. Only the Kornilovites, who were on the left flank of the attacking regiment, could help him. At the front, apart from the brutally battered Kuban division, there was no cavalry to support the attack. An armored car burst into the rear of the 1st regiment, followed by infantry. Under crossfire, shot from all sides, the 1st Drozdovsky regiment had to withdraw. Crowds of

red waves overwhelmed the few defenders of the white Crimea. On November 15, the fighters of the 51st division, together with units of the 1st Cavalry Army, entered Sevastopol, from where the last white ships had departed the day before.

Blucher received another Order of the Red Banner for the capture of the Crimea, and the Revolutionary Military Council of the 1st Cavalry Army presented the "red leader and winner at Perekop and Ishun" with a gold watch. In the following months, the 51st division, together with the army of Voroshilov and Budyonny, had to fight with yesterday's ally, Father Makhno. In the summer of 1921, the second meeting between Vasily Konstantinovich and Varetsky took place. The latter recalled that "Blucher felt at home among the peasantry," striking the villagers with his knowledge of agronomic subtleties. "Allow me to ask, what part will you be in, land?" one of the old men asked. "According to the land, dad," smiled Blucher, who suddenly discovered an excellent knowledge of the local Ukrainian dialect. "We are liberating your land from Makhno, from all sorts of disorder, so that no one interferes with your peaceful work on the land. Understood?" Once Blucher

and Varetsky ended up in the Don village, and Vasily Konstantinovich also quickly found a common language with the Cossacks and even sang songs with them. Then he said to Varetsky: "And the songs of the Cossacks are good. Only they don't sing like that, the old people sang better." Apparently, Vasily Konstantinovich had a chance to visit the Don before the revolution.

In Ukraine, when they stayed at the priest's house, Blucher even made friends with the priest and promised to send him paint (the priest was painting). Blucher's review, captured by Varetsky, is characteristic: "A good, talented old man. Too bad he's a priest." Vasily Konstantinovich himself did not believe in God, but he was ready to admit that decent people come across among the clergy. Varetsky summed up his impressions of the

legendary red commander in the following way: "The image of an intelligent, educated person and an authoritative commander remained in my memory. I could not say anything about him as a communist; however, I was left with the impression that he was critical of the social logic even of that time. Undoubtedly, his dryness and that emphasized correctness, which, like a barrier, separated Blucher from his interlocutors, spoiled the general impression. But Blucher, at the same time, was completely different, being surrounded by peasants, Red Army soldiers and outsiders who were not connected with the service of people. Although Vasily

Konstantinovich had to work mainly as workers before the revolution, he did not forget his peasant roots and always found a common language with the peasant. It was more difficult with an educated public, in front of which Blucher did not want to discover gaps in his own knowledge. So I tried to stay dry and correct, not delving into abstract matters alien to myself.

Blucher did not have to complete the fight against Makhno. Vasily Konstantinovich was recalled to the Far East, where, after the White Guard coup that took place on May 26, 1920 in Vladivostok, the situation of the pro-Soviet Far Eastern Republic was seriously complicated. On July 24, Blucher was already in Chita, where he became Minister of War and Commander-in-Chief of the People's Revolutionary Army of the Far East. This army was in a deplorable state. In a report to Lenin and Trotsky, Blucher described it as follows: "Begging, prostitution, theft, robbery, espionage, etc. Shameful phenomena have become a frequent element of army life. A military specialist who speculates on the latest things at a flea market and does not attend classes for this reason, responsible workers hired by artisans as apprentices and merchants as night watchmen, wives of military personnel begging around the city of "Christ

for the sake of it, fighters, but only fighters, with weapons in their hands, breaking into the apartments of residents with the aim of robbery; staff members - sick from hunger, fainting, stealing and selling everything that comes to hand, from a pencil to a typewriter and a secret document, organized gangs stealing cattle from peasants under the banner of confiscation of White Guard property - all this has become a difficult fact of everyday life, characterizing the brink to which the material insecurity of the army and the decomposition caused by abnormal living conditions have reached.

I note that in the report, Vasily Konstantinovich is unlikely to have greatly exaggerated. One of the leaders of the FER, P.P. Postyshev in his post-war memoirs wrote about the same thing - for example, in connection with the plundering of the Shmakov Monastery by the people's army: "Walking around the parts, we noticed some lights, approaching, we saw the drunken figures of the Red Guards. Some were dressed in priestly vestments, others in some other chlamys; everyone was drunk, they were playing pranks, large church candles were burning and they were playing cards with their fire. Everywhere vodka, barrels of honey, the beards of drunk old bearded men stuck out like a nail, because, clutching at the beards with honey-stained hands, they glued them together. We were greeted with ridicule and abuse. I had to send a disciplined unit, disperse them and re-arrest them, and shoot

the completely decomposed ones. It was terrible." The apocalyptic picture painted by Blucher prompted Vladimir Ilyich and Lev Davidovich to step up their efforts and allocate one and a half million rubles in gold to the FER. With these funds, the commander-in-chief was able to reorganize the People's Revolutionary Army. Some of them had to be shot. Meanwhile, detachments of the so-called "White rebels" under the command of the former commander of the Izhevsk division, General V.M. Molchanov on December 18, 1921 occupied Khabarovsk. They acted as if independently of the Amur government of the Merkulov brothers, but in reality - by secret agreement with the authorities of Vladivostok. The plans of the Amur government and General Molchanov were quite ambitious. Deputy of the Vladivostok People's Assembly, former Minister of War of the Omsk Directory, General V.G. Boldyrev recalled: "In connection with the military successes won and the accession

The Kamchatka Territory was waiting for the resonance of these successes on the Amur and in Transbaikalia. But the hotheads, as always in such cases, dreamed not only of Siberia, which was considered to be seized with unrest, but also of Moscow!

Dreams, of course, were not destined to come true. The NRA managed to stop the further advance of the Whites at the Ying station on the left bank of the Amur. Blucher began to prepare a counteroffensive. On January 11, 1922, units of the NRA attacked the positions of the Whites near the Volochaevka station, 50 kilometers from Khabarovsk. But the next day, the offensive bogged down. Blucher brought up fresh forces and on February 10 resumed the attack. On the 12th, the Volochaev fortifications fell. And they were serious: several rows of barbed wire, machine-gun nests, well-equipped artillery positions. Molchanov had 3.5 thousand bayonets, 11 guns, 99 machine guns, 3 armored trains, while Blucher had 2-3 times more infantry and artillery. Vasily Konstantinovich was helped by experience in storming the Crimean fortifications. It is not for nothing that Volochaevka was subsequently called the "second Perekop". Blucher forever

remembered the Volochaev battles: "In the snow, in the cold, half-starved, after 5 days in the open, our chains lay in front of the skillfully built enemy barriers at Volochaevka and, driven by a common desire to win or die, we won. And what, according to the enemy, seemed inaccessible to us, was achieved by our revolutionary ranks, despite the cold, hunger and extremely unfavorable terrain conditions for us. Vasily Konstantinovich prudently did not reveal, so to speak, the military-economic background of the

"miracle at Volochaevka". But Vsevolod Nikanorovich Ivanov, a journalist and writer close to the Merkulov brothers, spoke about him: "Adventurous Vladivostok merchants armed the Kappel units that came from the Volga. There were many weapons in Vladivostok and they were stored in warehouses. The Japanese "allied" command took these warehouses under its protection and thus laid a cunning paw on the supply of coastal non-socialist forces with ammunition. The supply of the Volga Army in the Pacific proceeded as follows: on dark nights, Chinese scows were secretly brought to the warehouses, in which a team of selected people headed by N.D. Merkulov, paid money to whomever should, in the appropriate currency, warehouses were opened, and the working team

headed by a member of the Amur government N.D. Merkulov frantically dragged boxes of ammunition into scows. I was told that there was a case when such a delicate night loading had to be carried out in a typhoon, and the excitement was such that a "member of the government" had to tie himself with a rope across the belly to a standing ship.

So this thin umbilical cord for supplying ammunition was cut off at the time when the fighting was going on under the frozen Volochaevka. The Volga army in the Pacific Ocean was stopped by the hand of a Japanese officer who refused to accept a certain amount

golden yen.

The "armed forces", suddenly becoming unarmed, by the will of the Japanese command, under the influence of various international conferences - Washington, Dairen, Changchun - lost their significance, slowly retreated beyond the lines agreed between the FER and Japan, concentrated in Spassk. The Japanese did not sympathize with the plans of General

Molchanov, who dreamed of starting a campaign deep into Russia from Volochaevka in the spring. They understood perfectly well that the 10,000-strong White army, concentrated in Primorye, could not defeat the 5-million-strong Red Army, since the much more numerous armies of Kolchak and Denikin failed to do so. At that moment, Japan was not ready for the occupation of the entire Russian Far East, and even more so Siberia, both because of a lack of its own resources, and mainly because of the opposition of another great Pacific power - the United States of America. The expedition to Khabarovsk had one goal - to make the Far East and Moscow, which stood behind the "buffer", more accommodating to Japanese demands regarding concessions in the Far East. When the goal was achieved, the Japanese officers in Vladivostok suddenly remembered the samurai code of honor "Bushido" and flatly refused to open the doors of warehouses to the Amur government for any bribes. When the White Rebels retreated from Volochaevka and Khabarovsk, on February 23, 1922, Blucher sent a letter to General Molchanov: "I would like to know how many victims, how many Russian corpses are still needed to

convince you of the futility and futility of your last attempt to fight with the strength of the revolutionary Russian people, on the ashes of economic

devastation erecting its new statehood? How many Russian martyrs have you been ordered to throw at the foot of Japanese and other foreign capital? How many Russian martyr bones are needed to build a pavement for more convenient passage of interventionist vehicles through the Russian Far East? ..

Among your ranks during the battles near Volochaevka and Kazakevichevo, I noticed many efficient people who are needed at the present moment for state work in Russia and the Far Eastern Republic. Do not destroy them for the sake of foreign gold, and the future history of our country will thank you for this.

The Commander-in-Chief of the NRA offered Viktorin Mikhailovich and his officers to go over to the side of the Soviet government, promising them high military posts. Molchanov ignored the letter and preferred to withdraw his troops under the protection of the Japanese troops. Thus, he undoubtedly saved himself and his subordinates from death, if not immediately, then in 37-38 years - for sure. General Molchanov died in 1975 in San Francisco at the age of 88. Marshal Blucher was beaten to death in the cellars of Lefortovo.

Vasily Konstantinovich did not have a chance to wear the laurels of the liberator of Vladivostok. Due to a conflict with a member of the Military Council of the NRA, I.M. Pogodin and Chief of Staff of the Army V.K. Tokarevsky Blucher was recalled from the Far East in July 1922. As usual, at the Volochaev victory, which predetermined the subsequent fall of the capital of the white Primorye, many fathers immediately appeared, and they could not share the laurels among themselves. The reason for the conflict was Blucher's dissatisfaction with the fact that Vyacheslav Konstantinovich sometimes sent papers for signature, first to Ivan Mikhailovich, and only then to the commander. Moscow decided to stop the squabble, replacing Blucher with I.P. Uborevich. Jerome Petrovich had a chance to enter Vladivostok, abandoned by the Japanese and whites, in October 1922. Blucher subsequently had the dubious honor of judging Uborevich in June 1937. No claims were brought against Vasily Konstantinovich in connection with his activities in the Far East. Vice versa,

his appointed commander of the 1st rifle corps stationed in the Petrograd region. It was much more respectable than the war minister of the operetta Far Eastern Republic and

commander of an army whose combat power did not exceed a full-blooded division. Blucher stayed in the

northern capital for two years, and in 1924 he was sent as chief military adviser to China to the head of the Kuomintang government, Sun Yat-sen, in Guangzhou. By that time, Blucher had already married Galina Pavlovna Kolchugina, whom he met in the Far East. They had two children - daughter Zoya and son Vsevolod. When the question arose of which surname to issue a foreign passport to Blucher, Vasily Konstantinovich took a pseudonym by the name of his wife - Galin, and the name and patronymic - by the names of the children - Zoya Vsevolodovich. When they objected to him that there was no name Zoya, the future marshal retorted: "But what, the names are only those that are in the calendar?" In the Chinese National Revolutionary Army, Blucher introduced the institution of commissars and became one of the main developers

of the plan for the famous Northern Expedition, during which the Kuomintang troops under the command of Marshal Chiang Kai-shek moved to the north of the country in 1926-1927 from the province of Guangdong, crushing the armies of local governors-dujuns. Vs. N. Ivanov, who lived in China for more than 20 years: "At that revolutionary time of my stay in Beijing (in 1920. - **B.S.**), China in its state system entered the era of "dujunat", that is, "marshals", something like our military governors general, only with the difference that our governors general were from the nobility, people of excellent secular education, the support of the king. In China of that time, the organization of military forces on the basis of the Manchu clans, tribes according to "banners" had already disappeared, any Chinese could become a "dujun" governor, seize power in a province with a population of 25 to 80 million people, without having any education, being illiterate, using only the winged wheel

military happiness.

Neither literacy nor knowledge was required for these fellows from the "fairies", that is, people with good health, Shakespearean characters, a clear, attentive mind, decisive acumen and Chinese super-dimensional cunning. These were people who "made themselves", well-chosen teams of daring, hunghuz, "fairies", "wu-san", who began their careers in the mountains and forests. They fought, they starved, they bet

map on the strong, advanced among the strong and took power over villages, cities, counties, provinces, developing their relations mainly not on terror, not on force, but on diplomacy, cooperation, mutual benefit. And when one of these was lucky enough to be at the head of a province with a population of 25 to 80 million people, he was already entering the international arena. The Chinese Revolution first of all "opened the doors" to

China, and such Chinese daredevils began to enjoy success with foreign politicians - after all, the opportunities to make money in China were enormous. Japan, America, England climbed into the open door of China with an infinite number of ingenious combinations in store. The stakes were small: a few old-fashioned weapons, and the prize - China - was huge. Among the numerous marshals-dared men, an endless fierce struggle began to boil. What were they fighting

for? For the unity of China. This is a huge clan of a three-quarter-billion nation of a cultured, educated people in its own way, where the most talented, strongest, invincible even with the smallest chance had to come to power.

To this it must be added that the USSR also rushed to China and had its daring men there—Marshal Feng Yu-hsiang with his National Armies in the north and Chiang Kai-shek in the south. The latter differed from other dujunks only in the level of education - after all, he graduated from the Japanese military academy. By the way, in this respect, he significantly surpassed Blucher. After the death of Sun Yat-sen, Chiang Kai-shek became the most influential leader of the Kuomintang revolutionary party, since he had real military power.

At first, the Chinese marshal and the Soviet adviser, who had yet to become a marshal, lived in perfect harmony. Blucher's adjutant and secretary in China, Mazurin, told Kazanin how, during the Northern Expedition, he accompanied Vasily Konstantinovich and Chiang Kai-shek, who flew together on the same plane over the front, developed plans and carried out operations together. However, after the successful completion of the campaign, the Chinese marshal began to be weary of an alliance with the Chinese communists, with whom he was not going to share the fruits of victory. He, nevertheless, wanted to maintain friendly relations with the USSR, in need of financial and economic assistance.

One of the Chinese generals - associates of Chiang Kai-shek frankly told the Soviet advisers: "We are against the Communist Party of China, but we respect and welcome your party, your government and your army." The governors of individual provinces saw the Soviet presence as a certain stabilizing force. According to Kazanin, "Blucher still often played the role of an arbitrator between Chinese military cliques, and we patronized one or another more honest and reliable group." Chiang Kai-shek, on the other hand, wanted to limit Blucher's role to purely military matters, in order to decide for himself which of the Chinese generals was "more honest." In April 1927, the marshal officially broke with the communists by arresting the communists in Shanghai. On the eve of the banquet, he declared a break with the Communist Party. The Soviet advisers defiantly left the banquet, but remained in China for several more months, while in Moscow they made a choice between Chiang Kai-shek and the Communists. Meanwhile, the left wing of the Kuomintang, which controlled the government in Wuhan, which the Kremlin thought would be an alternative to Chiang Kai-shek, supported the actions of the marshal in July. After that, Blucher and other Soviet advisers left China, and in Moscow they sanctioned an uprising of military units loyal to the communists in Nanchang. It began on August 1, 1927, five days after the withdrawal of Soviet specialists from the Kuomintang army, but was suppressed in October. Vasily Konstantinovich left Shanghai for his homeland on August 11, 1927. In the memoirs of Kazanin, a portrait of Blucher from the period of the Northern

Campaign was preserved, given from the words of Mazurin: "After the campaign, all eighteen wounds opened in him. You know what kind of trip it was. Through the deadly heat and disease. Everyone was exhausted, undressed, fanned themselves with anything, and he sat on his nose, straight as a string, in a tightly buttoned tunic, in belts and with weapons, not allowing himself to unfasten a single button. Mark Isaakovich himself remembered General Galin in the same way, buttoned up: "A beautiful, attractive, very simple and at the same time very strong and very restrained man stood in front of you and talked to you. The open gaze of gray eyes under dark thick eyebrows, invariable smartness, correctness and dignity.

Vasily Konstantinovich also took care of the soldiers in China, not distinguishing the Russians from the Chinese in this respect. Once Kazanin told him about Chiang Kai-shek's speech in Nanchang, where he stated that "the Northern campaign cost eighteen thousand dollars (Soviet weapons came free. - **B.S.**) and thirty thousand killed." At this time, Blucher's adjutant Gmira entered and, having heard the last words about the thirty thousand killed, clarified: "And according to the information received from ours, not 30, but 50 thousand fillies died."

From anger, Vasily Konstantinovich's gray eyes turned almost white, and he said indignantly: "Gmira, I warn you for the second time: do not use this word like a parrot. Where did you get it? From the old officers at the school? The adjutant lowered his head guiltily. Blucher continued, almost choking with rage: "Don't you dare use that expression. You say it again, and whether I need you or not, I'll expel you. The soldier is not a filly; soldier is

beginning and the

end". On another occasion, Blucher asked Kazanin who was in command of the British troops that had landed in Shanghai. "The newspapers talk about the commander of the expeditionary corps, General Duncan and the chief of staff, Colonel Gort (later, in 1940, who became famous for the successful evacuation of the British army from Dunkirk. - B.S.), mainly **about** the second," reported the head of the information bureau at the main military adviser. - Why about the second? - Vasily Konstantinovich was wary. "Yes," Kazanin remarked, "a

romantic officer, he has the Order of Victoria for bravery. They write that during the entire world war only 32 people were awarded this order. Wounded many times.

"And that's good," Blucher suddenly laughed, "it means that there will be no need to meddle anywhere. You know, after the first wound, the ardor cools down by fifty percent, after the second - another fifty, and so Further".

The experience of the First World War, where Vasily Konstantinovich was seriously wounded, taught him not to risk soldiers' lives in vain.

Blucher also spoke to Kazanin about the Chinese soldiers with knowledge of the matter. Mark Isaakovich once expressed his surprise: "I often have to see army units when I go to Wuchang, and I

it strikes me how young the soldiers are, almost children, and they seem weak to me.

Whom did you think you would see? Blucher inquired. "I expected to see, so to speak, bearded men, elderly peasants, farm laborers, workers exhausted by work for a landowner or at a factory and rebelling," admitted Kazanin, who was still captivated by the stereotypes of Soviet propaganda, which was guided by the classical Marxist scheme.

Blucher took this tirade somewhat ironically, revealing a subtle knowledge of peasant psychology: - Not necessarily. There are those in the army who you are waiting for, but remember: an adult peasant has a family, children, hungry mouths - he cannot leave, and he may have lost hope. So he tries every day to get by, to get it there, to finish it here. He is petty, he is mired in the economy. But next to him is his son or younger brother, anger and impatience burn in him, he wants to take revenge (I wonder why? - **B.S.**). And he goes partisan. Such a boy does not quite clearly understand the agrarian question, perhaps he does not even want land. He simply strives for a bright life, looking for a way out. The soldier lives the dream. "That's right," Kazanin agreed, "but only all of them

some small ones.

"Not all are small," Blucher objected. And he added, half-jokingly:
- A big one in the war is better? It's just easier to get into it."

Neither Vasily Konstantinovich nor Mark Isaakovich began to specify what attracted young Chinese to the revolutionary, as well as to the counter-revolutionary, armies mainly one circumstance: the opportunity to profit at the expense of their neighbor. In this they did not fundamentally differ from their leaders. Younger brothers and sons, who did not have their own allotment, before the revolution, went to look for a "bright life" in gangs of hunghuz robbers. After the outbreak of the Civil War in China, they joined the ranks of the armies of various dujunns, often moving from one to another, sometimes with entire divisions. The land of the soldiers was of little interest, but they attracted salaries (if paid) and the opportunity to profit with impunity at the expense of the civilian population.

In China, Blucher met his second wife, with whom he returned to Russia. Galina Alexandrovna Kolchugina was a school friend of Kazanin from Harbin, and he left us her portrait: "She had everything the same

youthful face, lively, sly brown eyes, and the same easy, intelligent, teasing manner of conversation. Galina grew up in Harbin and received her secondary education there. She knew English and was Blucher's constant companion in China. Of course, she asked me to come to them (when in the last months of Vasily Konstantinovich's stay in China they all lived together in Hankow. - **B.S.**) and recall the old friendship, but I, of course, did not go. It seemed inappropriate for me, a young man and an ordinary worker, to get on a short foot with the famous hero of the Civil War ("After all, I am a worm in comparison with him! In comparison with him, with such faces - with his excellency himself!" - if you recall Pierre Beranger in translated by Vasily Kurochkin. - **B.S.**) just because he married my school friend. Galina was a smart and thoughtful person with her own opinion." In fact, she served as her husband's personal secretary during his Chinese business trip. Upon his return from China, Blucher was appointed assistant commander of the

Ukrainian military district. He served in this position for two years. In the summer of 1929, Vasily Konstantinovich was again called to the Far East. Here, tensions grew in Soviet-Chinese relations in connection with the fate of the Chinese Eastern Railway (CER), which since 1924 was formally under joint Soviet-Chinese management. However, by 1929, thanks to the policy of the railway management, there were practically no Chinese officials left on the CER, and control over it was entirely in Soviet hands. The government of Chiang Kai-shek, a year earlier, after the assassination of Marshal Zhang Zuolin by Japanese intelligence superdujunna of the northern provinces, was able to establish control over the north of the country. On July 10, 1929, it tried to install Chinese representatives on the CER under the protection of troops. Moscow decided to demonstrate who is the boss in Harbin. On August 6, 1929, a resolution of the Revolutionary Military Council appeared on the creation of a Special Far Eastern Army, which included all the forces of the Red Army located in the Far East. Blucher was placed at the head of the EDF as a man who not only had a good knowledge of the theater of operations, but had also recently led the actions of Chiang Kai-shek's troops. On August 16, Moscow severed diplomatic relations with Nanjing. On August 18, the advance detachments of the EFA invaded

Manchuria. In hindsight, on January 2, 1930, Pravda gave the following propaganda justification for what had happened: "OKDVA responded to blows and provocations with the greatest restraint, without going beyond the framework of necessary self-defense. When it became clear that these raids and attacks were preparations for serious offensive operations against the USSR, our army launched a lightning-fast retaliatory strike, which forced the enemy to abandon their anti-Soviet strongholds in a panic.

The fighting, which took place only on Chinese territory, continued until 20 November. The average monthly number of formations of the Special Far East participating in the conflict was about 18.5 thousand people, which approximately corresponded to the staffing level of one rifle division. In October, one rifle division, supported by the Far Eastern (Amur) flotilla, fought in November, three other divisions and a cavalry brigade. The number of Chinese troops was about three times larger, but they had a significantly smaller number of guns and machine guns, had outdated rifles and had no aviation at all, while several air squadrons operated from the Soviet side. The poorly armed and badly organized Chinese troops were utterly defeated. It was a clash between a feudal Asiatic army and a more or less modern European army. In addition, Blucher's army was opposed mainly by former soldiers of Zhang Zuolin, demoralized after the death of their leader and not burning with a special desire to fight for Chiang Kai-shek. The ratio of losses was also corresponding. For example, only in the area of Manchuria and Chzhayalyn stations, Soviet troops captured

8,300 prisoners, losing only 123 people killed and wounded. The Chinese Sungarian flotilla was also completely sunk. Total Soviet losses, according to official figures, amounted to 143 killed, 4 missing and 665 wounded. The Chinese lost more than a thousand people only killed. On December 22, 1929, a Soviet-Chinese protocol was signed in Khabarovsk, restoring the situation on the CER that existed before July 10, 1929. Diplomatic relations between the USSR and

China were restored only three years later, on December 22, 1932, when, after the Japanese occupation

Manchuria, Chiang Kai-shek needed Soviet support and was ready to forget the Soviet aggression of the 29th year.

For the victory in the Soviet-Chinese conflict, Blucher was awarded the Order of the Red Star at number 1 in May 1930. The Special Far Eastern Army became the Red Banner. In total, Vasily Konstantinovich spent nine years as commander of OKDVA - almost until his arrest. Admiral N.G. recalls Blucher's activities in the Far East. Kuznetsov, who in the late 1930s commanded the Pacific Fleet. With reference to his friend Grigory Mikhailovich Stern, who at one time served in the central apparatus of the military department, and later as chief of staff of the Special Far East, Nikolai Gerasimovich quoted People's Commissar of Defense Voroshilov: "When Marshal Blucher is in the east, you can have troops one corps less." Kliment Efremovich clearly favored Vasily Konstantinovich. The peasant genealogy and the proletarian past made Blucher a very convenient hero for the propaganda myth. Awards and titles rained down on him. In 1931, Vasily Konstantinovich was awarded the Order of Lenin, in 1934 at the 17th Party Congress he was elected a candidate member of the Central Committee, and in 1935 he was awarded the title of Marshal of the Soviet Union. The love of the people's commissar for the commander of the OKDVA ended only in August of the 38th, after the Hassan events. Together with Blucher, P.A. served in Khabarovsk. Rotmistrov. Pavel Alekseevich recalled: "The exceptional attention of V.K.

Blucher paid attention to improving the military-technical knowledge of commanders and political workers, the level of their personal fire training, believing that only commanders and political workers who were fluent in weapons could successfully train fighters. He himself shot perfectly from all types of weapons, he even knew how to prepare data for firing artillery from open and closed positions. Vasily Konstantinovich often and, as a rule, suddenly appeared at the shooting ranges, personally checking the results of the shooting of the commanding and political staff.

He did it in his own way. Having learned what exercise was being practiced on the firing course, he asked for a weapon and, together with everyone, went to the firing line. After two or three trial shots, the army commander fired at snipers. And the bitter embarrassment was experienced by the one who next to him shot badly. Blucher usually only asked the name of the command

reproachfully said: "How can you, dear comrade, train your subordinates if you yourself shoot so badly?" He, of course, burned with shame. Knowing that the commander has an excellent memory and the next time he will definitely ask about him, the one who blundered in shooting persistently improved his fire training.

It is felt that Vasily Konstantinovich was closest to the individual training of fighters and commanders and questions of tactics. For a full understanding of operational and strategic problems and solving organizational issues on the scale of a separate army (in fact, a front), he lacked a general and military education. Not a single work on military theory or history came out of the pen of Vasily Konstantinovich. And as for the orders he issued, it is difficult to say when he himself was their authors, and when they were the chiefs of staff. In matters of training, Blucher adhered to

completely mythological views, being sure, in particular, that a poorly shooting commander cannot teach his subordinates to shoot well. Meanwhile, there are enough examples of the opposite property. Here S. G. Pushkarev in "Memoirs of a Historian" tells how during the Civil War in the Volunteer Army at machine-gun courses as an instructor, he taught 10 of his students to shoot from a machine gun in such a way that they performed test firing best of all, while Sergey Germanovich himself shot worse than all the other instructors and even asked to be released from shooting along with the instructors so as not to be embarrassed in front of the students.

Blucher saw that the collective farmers were working neither shakily nor well, but he saw the overcoming of the food crisis by no means on the path of dissolving the collective farms, but rather on the path of reviving the Arakcheev military settlements. Here is what Rotmistrov reports: "It's not working out well," said Vasily Konstantinovich, "we have a lot of land, the land is fertile, but we cannot supply ourselves with bread and feed for livestock. We drag everything from the central regions of the country, clog the railway with unprofitable, unnecessary transportation.

Blucher put forward the idea of food supply for the army by its own forces. He was supported by the Military Council of OKDVA and the regional committee of the party, approved the plan in Moscow. March 17, 1932 (just when the mass famine began in Ukraine and the North Caucasus. - **B.S.**)

The Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks decided to form a special collective farm corps (OKK) within the OKDVA in order to “strengthen the security of the Soviet Far Eastern borders, develop the richest virgin and fallow lands, provide the population of the Far East and the army with food, significantly reduce the import of bread and meat from Siberia to the Far East, to develop the economy of the Far East”.

The commander of the OKK, numbering 60 thousand people, Blucher appointed his colleague in the Ural raid M.V. Kalmykov. In practice, the Red Army collective farmers and the economy were not very efficient, and they were engaged in combat training carelessly - there was simply no time left for it during the period of suffering. But on paper, everything looked solid: the Special Far East provided itself with food and acquired a powerful additional force of three cavalry *Pravda*, rifle self-sufficiency of the army with meat and fodder was achieved only in 1935, and potatoes, vegetables and bread still had to be imported from the outside.

When the writer Konstantin Simonov asked Marshal I.S. Konev, who served in the Far East immediately after the arrest of Blucher, what is his opinion about Vasily Konstantinovich, Ivan Stepanovich stated that Blucher “was by the thirty-seventh year a man with a past, but without a future, a man who, in terms of the level of his knowledge, ideas, did not go far from Civil War and belonged to the category that Voroshilov, Budyonny and some other former cavalymen, who lived out of date, past views, represented at the beginning of the war. It is impossible to imagine that Blucher would have coped with the front in a modern war. Apparently, he would have coped with this no better than Voroshilov or Budyonny. In any case, Blucher failed such a small operation as the Hassan events. Perhaps one can agree with the opinion of Konev. I will only add that in a combat situation, Vasily Konstantinovich practically did not have to command more than a division. The experience of the chief military adviser in China and the

commander of the ODA in the battles near the CER was related to the fight against a very weak enemy, which cannot be compared with either the Japanese or the German army.

In the Far East, Blucher married for the third time. In 1930 he broke up with Galina Kolchugina. The future third wife, Glafira Lukinichna Bezverkhova, appeared on the horizon of the OKDVA commander two years later. In 1932 Russified Ukrainians lived in Khabarovsk next to Blucher. Glafira's home name was Graf. It was with this name that the acquaintance with the future marshal began. Once in the yard, a friend called out to her: "Count!" Vasily Konstantinovich was just passing by, who asked in surprise: "Why the Count?" Glafira explained. Blucher frowned: "I don't like this name, something in it from the past." Obviously, Vasily Konstantinovich had an unpleasant association with the count's title, but he did not transfer his irritation to Glafira. Then we met at a community work day to clean the yard and the street. Blucher participated in it on an equal basis with other residents. Then Glafira liked him. Many years later, Blucher's widow told the writer Vladimir Karpov about this meeting at a subbotnik: "He was in civilian clothes (not in uniform to wave a broom! Although this happened in Soviet times! In the 1960s, the embassy in Egypt organized a subbotnik, during which the colonels from the military attache's office in full uniform cheerfully waved their brooms, and the Egyptians pointed their fingers and laughed. - B.S.), sociable, was not perceived as a big **boss**. Apparently, Glafira sunk into the soul of Vasily Konstantinovich, and soon he sent her an invitation ticket to a performance at the House of the Red Army. Glafira Lukinichna recalled in a conversation with Vladimir Karpov: "Then there were short, seemingly non-committal meetings. Then he began to write me notes, and I answered him. I began to take books from the library from him, we talked for a long time. In general, I realized that everything was already quite serious, and both I had feelings for him and he flared up for me. Once he said very seriously: "We need to talk," he thought, and, as if reflecting, he added: "I know that I will pay dearly for my love. But I can't do anything with myself anymore. I can handle it, but can your young shoulders handle it? After all, we have a difference in age of twenty-five years!" I was completely confused. Happy confusion. I did not know how to answer, and did not find anything better than to read the lines from the poem.

The next day, Vasily Konstantinovich came to our house. My parents have already noticed and expressed dissatisfaction with my behavior. The father did not expect anything good from this acquaintance (as if he looked into the water, as if anticipating that the connection with the famous commander would lead his daughter straight to the Gulag. - B.S.) : the difference in years, the difference in position seemed to him simply incompatible (and in the groom is still the third marriage. - **B.S.**). And suddenly Vasily Konstantinovich himself comes. Mom fussed, began to cover table.

Vasily Konstantinovich talked to my parents very well, as they say, warmly, and made an official proposal. So we became husband and wife. In 1933, our daughter was born, we named her Vaira (again, Blucher was at odds with the saints. - **B.S.**). Then son Vasily. Vasily Konstantinovich was very fond of children. Two others lived with us. Seva - from his second wife and adopted daughter Nina (Blucher took her in 1921 in Chita, where they brought orphans from the starving Volga region; Nina moved in with her sister in 1937, which saved her from subsequent repressions. - B.S.) " .

A dramatic turn in the fate of Vasily Konstantinovich came in 1937. Glafira Lukinichna recalled: "At the end of May 1937, Vasily Konstantinovich was unexpectedly summoned to Moscow, I went with him. We stayed at the Metropol Hotel. Then there were numerous arrests, many of Blucher's acquaintances had already been arrested. The time was so difficult, gloomy, it was not clear what was happening, it was hard to believe that all those arrested were enemies and spies. Soon after our arrival, Vasily Konstantinovich went to visit the head of the Main Political Directorate of the Red Army, Gamarnik. He was sick. Blucher was on good terms with him and decided to visit him. Or maybe he wanted to know what was actually going on. The husband returned from Yan Borisovich, gloomy, taciturn. The next day he again went to Gamarnik,

it was already May 31st. He returned literally in a depressed state. I think Gamarnik told him that a trial was planned and who would be judged there.

And on June 1, Vasily Konstantinovich was shaving in the toilet, and I took fresh newspapers and, as soon as I opened it, I immediately saw a message that shocked me, and I screamed: "Vasily! Jan Borisovich

shot himself!" Vasily somehow very calmly turned to me and said:

- You think before you speak. - What do you think! Here, look, look what is written in the newspaper.

Vasily looked at the newspaper and did not say anything to me, but only walked back and forth around the room and concentrated on something thought.

Gamarnik's daughter Victoria also recalled Blucher's visit: "On the 30th, Blucher came to his father - they knew each other well from the Far East - and they talked about something with their father for a long time. Mother's father later said that he was offered to become a member of the trial of Tukhachevsky. "But how can I! he exclaimed. "I know they are not enemies. Blucher said that if I refused, they could arrest me. On the 31st Blucher stopped by again for a short time. Then some people came and sealed my father's safe. He was told that he had been removed from office, and his deputies Hovsepyan and Bulin had been arrested. Father was ordered to be at home. As soon as the people from the NKVD left, we heard a shot in his room. When my mother and I ran in, it was all over."

From Viktoria Yanovna's story, it seems to follow that Blucher did not come to Gamarnik at all in order to consult, and even more so not to find out the details of the Tukhachevsky case. It seems that Voroshilov chose Vasily Konstantinovich to play the role of a kind of truce envoy, designed to convey an ultimatum to Yan Borisovich: either you will judge the participants in the "military-fascist conspiracy", or you will find yourself in the dock with them. It was probably no coincidence. There is reason to suspect that the former friendship between Gamarnik and Blucher has cracked in recent years and Yan Borisovich has become involved in the attempt of Tukhachevsky and his comrades to remove Blucher from the Far East.

Gamarnik shot himself after being asked to be a member of the trial of Tukhachevsky and his comrades, a court with a death sentence. The head of GlavPUR understood that the refusal would make him another defendant in the upcoming trial, and preferred to die voluntarily, without staining himself either with participation in an unrighteous trial, or with the shame of humiliating repentance and execution against a blank wall in the Lubyanka or Lefortovo dungeon. Blucher, on the other hand, had to drink the cup of humiliation almost to the very bottom.

From June 1 to June 4, 1937, Vasily Konstantinovich is present at a meeting of the Main Military Council, where the issue of a fascist military conspiracy in the Red Army is discussed and members of the Special Judicial Presence are appointed to try the conspirators. On June 2, Stalin delivered a speech. He claimed that Tukhachevsky and his associates were going to remove Blucher from the post of commander of the Special Far Eastern Army: "They report (to their German masters. - **B.S.**) that we have such and such command posts occupied, we ourselves occupy large command posts - I, Tukhachevsky, and over there, Uborevich, and here is Yakir. They demand - but what about Japan, the Far East? And so the campaign begins, a very serious campaign. They want to remove Blucher. And there is a candidate. Well, of course, Tukhachevsky. If not him, then who. Why withdraw? Agitation is led by Gamarnik, led by Aroniggam. So they deftly lead that they raised almost all of Blucher's entourage against him. Moreover, they convinced the leadership of the military center that it should be removed. Why, I ask, explain what's the matter? Here he is drinking. OK then. Well, what else? Here he does not get up early in the morning, does not go to the troops. What else? Outdated, does not understand new methods of work. Well, today he does not understand, tomorrow he will understand, the experience of the old fighter does not disappear. Look, the Central Committee faces the fact of all the filth that is being said about Blucher. Putna is bombarded, Aronshtam is bombarding, Gamarnik is bombarding us in Moscow. Finally, we call a meeting. When he arrives, see him. A man is a good man. We don't know him, what's the matter? Let's give him a speech - great. We check it in this order. People from the

places signaled, we are convening a meeting in the hall of the Central Committee. He is, of course, wiser, more experienced than any Tukhachevsky, than any Uborevich who is an alarmist, and than any Yakir who is no different in military affairs. There was a small group. Let's take Kotovsky, he never commanded an army or a front. If people don't know what they're doing, we'll scold them - go to hell, we don't have a monastery. Putting people in command positions who don't drink and don't know how to fight is not good. There are people with 10 years of commanding experience, indeed, sand is pouring out of them, but they are not removed, on the contrary, they are kept. We then scolded Gamarnik, and

be, the Germans informed, took all measures. Wanted to put another, but does not exceed".

And today it is impossible to say with certainty what in this rather awkward Stalinist speech is true and what is a lie. As for Gamarnik's denunciations of Blucher, Joseph Vissarionovich may have added. After all, the marshal's widow claimed that Jan Borisovich and Vasily Konstantinovich were on good terms. But, on the other hand, Gamarnik's daughter insists that it was Blucher who gave her father the Voroshilov ultimatum. Vasily Konstantinovich, in the end, could not dedicate his wife to his official squabbles, could not tell that he and Gamarnik quarreled. But one can agree with the fact that the marshal, like Kotovsky, never commanded either the army or the front. And about Blucher's drunkenness, the rumors were probably not groundless. It's just that for the time being Stalin did not consider this such a significant drawback as to remove him from the post of commander of the OKDVA because of this. So Konev, in the conversation with Simonov cited above, claimed that Blucher "recently was generally in a difficult moral state, he drank heavily, he went down." Konstantin Simonov commented on this judgment of Ivan Stepanovich in the 70s as follows: "This moment does not seem convincing to me, because in the situation that had been created by the thirty-eighth year - by the time of the Khasan events, when Blucher already felt like a man with a head, put under the ax - it is difficult to judge him for the unsuccessful operation. This was already largely the result of the created atmosphere, and not only of his leadership, although it may have been unsuccessful, there is no need to argue. Yes, and omission, morale, drunkenness - all this could be largely the consequences of the situation that has developed in the army and, in particular in the Far East, around Blucher himself. Judging by Stalin's speech, Blucher's drunkenness was widely known even in 1937, even before the arrest of Tukhachevsky and his comrades. And it still remains a mystery whether Joseph Vissarionovich already predetermined the fate of Blucher or whether the main reason for his disgrace and arrest was the failure at Hasan. At the Military Council of June 1-4, Blucher sharply condemned the participants in the military-fascist conspiracy and obediently denounced in court

accused of treason. At a meeting of the Military Council, Vasily Konstantinovich expressed his readiness to deal with pests in his Far East: "Now, having returned to the troops, we will have to start by collecting a small asset, because the troops say more, and less, and not like that, as needed. In a word, you need to tell the troops what the matter is here.

- That is, to count who is arrested? Stalin remarked ironically.

"No, not quite like that," Blucher was embarrassed. And Iosif Vissarionovich explained what exactly it was necessary to tell his subordinates about the

"Tukhachevsky conspiracy": - If I were in your place, being the commander of the OKDVA, I would do this: I would gather a higher staff and report to them in detail. And then I, in my presence, would have gathered lower command personnel and explained more briefly, but intelligibly enough for them to understand that the enemy had crept into our army, he wanted to undermine our power, that they were hired people of our enemies - the Japanese and Germans. We are clearing our army of them; do not be afraid, we will smash everyone who is on the road into a cake. The upper one would say wider.

The "good man" Blucher so zealously undertook to eradicate the "enemies of the people" in the Special Far East that by the beginning of the conflict near Lake Khasan, many command positions were vacant. The marshal was afraid to replace them with new people: what if tomorrow they too become "hired people" of the Japanese? The scope of repressions in the Far East, carried out under the leadership of the head of the local NKVD G.S. Lyushkov, reached a record high. Meanwhile, there are clouds in the Far East. Stalin needed to demonstrate to his people and the world around him that despite the repressions, the Red Army had fully retained its combat capability and could, if necessary, punch the damned imperialists in the teeth. On June 8, 1938, the Main Military Council of the Red Army adopted a resolution on the creation of the Far Eastern Front on the basis of the Special Far Eastern Red Banner Army, which clearly indicated the approach of a military thunderstorm. On June 13, Lyushkov fled to Manchuria, shortly before that he had been summoned to Moscow. Genrikh Samoilovich feared that upon his return to the capital he would be arrested and share the fate of the "old Chekist guard" of the former people's commissar G.G. Berries,

gradually destroyed by the people of his successor N.I. Yezhov. It is also possible that, knowing about the upcoming Khasan events and being aware, through the Special Departments of the OKDVA, of the weak combat capability of the Soviet troops, Lyushkov, not without reason, assumed that he would become one of

the "scapegoats" for failure. It soon broke out in the area of Lake Khasan, where the borders of the USSR, Korea and the puppet state of Manchukuo created by the Japanese converged. Failure at Hassan cost the commander of the Far Eastern Front, Marshal of the Soviet Union Vasily Konstantinovich Blucher, not only a high post, but also his head.

According to the Japanese version, published in August 1938 in the Gaiji Geppo bulletin published by the Security Bureau of the **Ministry** of Internal Affairs of Japan, the events unfolded as follows : dozens of Soviet soldiers crossed the Soviet-Manchurian border and, having illegally occupied the Changgufen height, began to build fortifications on it. On July 14, representatives of the authorities of Manchukuo, and on July 15, the government of Japan protested in connection with the actions of the Soviet side. In response, the USSR continued to increase the number of its contingent in the height area. As a result of countermeasures taken by the imperial army, as well as negotiations between the Japanese ambassador to the USSR Shigemitsu and the Soviet People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs Litvinov, which took place on August 4, 7 and 10, an armistice agreement was concluded, and then, on August 11–13, an agreement on demarcation borders in the area, thanks to which this incident was finally resolved. The Soviet version of what caused the fighting at Lake Khasan, of course, is different. According to it, on

July 15, 1938, the Japanese gendarme Shakuni Matsushima violated the border in the Zaozernaya area. The intruder was killed by a shot from a rifle. He was shot by the head of the engineering service of the Posyet detachment V. Vinevitin. The Japanese claimed that the corpse lay on the Manchurian side of the border, and therefore the Russians were to blame for the incident. A subsequent investigation, initiated by Blucher, showed that the murder actually took place on the territory of Manchukuo. But it all started a few days earlier. In early July, the Soviet

border guards secretly took up positions on the top of Zaozernaya and began to dig trenches there and erect barbed wire. The border ran along the crest of the hill. On July 12, the Japanese discovered Soviet fortifications, and on the 15th they sent a detachment of gendarmes there, one of which was killed. On the same day, Charge d'Affaires of Japan in Moscow Nishi demanded that the Soviet side return the border guards to their previous positions. In response, Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs B. Stomonyakov stated that not a single Soviet soldier had violated the border. Four days later, a sharp exchange of views took place between Ambassador M. Shigemitsu and People's Commissar M. Litvinov. At the initiative of the Japanese command, dozens of local residents crossed the border with letters asking the Russians to leave the Manchurian land. Interestingly, the Soviet side directly linked the battles near Lake Khasan with the flight of the former chief of the Far Eastern NKVD. In the wall newspaper of the Soviet embassy in Tokyo with the characteristic title "Height Zaozernaya - primordially Russian land", the contents of which became known to the Japanese agent, it was stated that the Japanese press in connection with the "Lyushkov case" fanned a hysterical and deceitful propaganda campaign, and the Soviet Union was forced to strengthen their Far Eastern borders. But it was just a propaganda ploy, though not for the general public, but for diplomats and the military. In fact, as we remember, the Far Eastern Front was formed a month before the first shots were fired at Zaozernaya.

In the meantime, Blucher intervened in the matter, sending his own commission to Zaozernaya. The secret order of People's Commissar of Defense Voroshilov, issued on August 31, 1938 and dedicated to the results of the Khasan battles, said indignantly: "The leadership of the commander of the Far Eastern Red Banner Front, Marshal Blucher, during the period of hostilities near Lake Khasan was completely unsatisfactory and bordered on conscious **defeatism**. All his behavior during the time preceding the hostilities and during the duplicity, indiscipline and sabotage of the armed rebuff to the Japanese troops who had seized part of our territory. Knowing in advance about the upcoming Japanese provocation (more precisely, the Soviet one. - **B.S.**) and about the government's decisions on this matter, announced by Comrade Litvinov to Ambassador Shigemitsu, having received on July 22 the directive of the People's Commissar

Defense on bringing the entire front on alert, comrade. Blucher limited himself to issuing appropriate orders and did nothing to check the preparation of troops to repulse the enemy and did not take real measures to support the border guards with field troops. Instead, on July 24, quite unexpectedly, he questioned the legality of the actions of our border guards near Lake Khasan. Secretly from a member of the Military Council comrade. Mazepov, his chief of staff comrade. Stern, Deputy People's Commissar of Defense comrade Mekhlis and Deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs comrade. Frinovsky, who were at that time in Khabarovsk (it was far from accidental that they all arrived even before the start of the fighting. - **B.S.**), comrade. Blucher sent a commission to the height of Zaozernaya and, without the participation of the chief of the border station, investigated the actions of our border guards. The commission created in such a suspicious manner discovered a "violation" by our border guards of the Manchurian border by 3 meters and, therefore, "established" our "guilty" in the outbreak of the conflict on Lake Khasan. In view of this Com. Blucher sends a telegram to the People's Commissar of Defense about this alleged violation of the Manchurian border by us and demands the immediate arrest of the head of the border station and other "culprits in provoking the conflict" with the Japanese. This telegram was sent to Com. Blucher also secretly from the comrades listed above. Even after instructions from the government to stop fussing with all sorts of commissions and investigations and on the exact implementation of the decisions of the Soviet government and the orders of the people's commissar of defense comrade. Blucher does not change his defeatist position and continues to sabotage the organization of an armed rebuff to

On July 25, the day after the arrival of the Blucher commission, the head of the troops of the Far Eastern border district, Sokolov, reprimanded his subordinate, the head of the Posyetsky border detachment, Grebennik: "Where does it say that command personnel who have nothing to do with border protection should be allowed on the border line? Why don't you follow the order to prevent access to the border without permission?.. You don't follow the order, and the chief of staff of the army fixes one trench behind the border line, there are barbed wire. Why does it differ from your scheme, signed by Alekseev (chief of staff of the Posyet border detachment. - **B.S.**)?"

- The equipment of the height passed at night, - uncertainly Grebennik justified himself.

- Why do your reports do not agree with the scheme, is it true or not? Sokolov did not let up. "After checking with a theodolite, there were small errors," the head of the Posyet border detachment admitted. - Now this error is corrected.

— Has the 4-meter border strip been taken into account? the chief inquired border guards of the Far East.

"It has been taken into account,"

Grebennik assured. "It means that the trench and the wire are located behind the 4-meter border strip on the adjacent side," Sokolov

specified. "The trench is difficult to determine," the commander of the border detachment explained. "According to the instruments, supposedly part of the trench went a few centimeters forward, and the wire tripper is located nearby in front of the trench, at the height of the grass. We repeat, we are correcting this error now.

If we translate this evasive dialogue into ordinary Russian, it becomes clear that in fact there was a violation of the border by the Soviet border guards, but they preferred to call it a mistake related to the imperfection of geodetic instruments. And Kuzma Evdokimovich Grebennik seems to be understandable. More recently, Lyushkov went to Manchuria in his sector, and then a commission sent by Blucher accuses the poor fellow of "provoking a conflict with the Japanese," and the formidable Far Eastern marshal himself demands his arrest. It is unlikely, of course, that Kuzma Evdokimovich sent fighters to the crest of Zaozernaya on his own initiative. And the fatal shot at the Japanese gendarme, I think, was not at all accidental. But that it was he who, if something happened, would be made the main and only culprit of the incident, the head of the Posyet border detachment understood very well. However, Stalin decided to go all the way and show the Japanese the power of the Red Army. The trouble was that the Red Army soldiers were not very good at fighting. In the final order of Voroshilov, this

was stated quite frankly: "The culprits for these major shortcomings and for the excessive losses we suffered in a relatively small military clash are the commanders, commissars and chiefs of all degrees of the Far Eastern Red Banner Front and, first of all,

commander of the Far Eastern Red Banner Front, Marshal Blucher. Instead of honestly devoting all his strength to the cause of eliminating sabotage and combat training of the Far Eastern Red Banner Front and truthfully informing the Party and the Main Military Council about the shortcomings in the life of the troops of the front, Comrade. Blyukher systematically, from year to year, covered up his deliberately poor work and inactivity with reports about successes, the growth of the combat training of the front and its general prosperous state. In the same spirit, he made a report for many hours at a meeting of the Main Military Council on May 28-31, 1938, in which he hid the true state of the troops of the Far Eastern Front and argued that the troops of the front were well trained and combat-ready in all respects.

Numerous enemies of the people, who were sitting next to Blucher, skillfully hid behind his back, carrying out their criminal work to disorganization disintegrate the troops of the Far Eastern of the Red Banner Front. But even after the exposure and removal from the army of traitors and spies, comrade. Blucher failed or did not want to truly realize the cleansing of the front from the enemies of the people. Under the flag of special vigilance, contrary to the instructions of the Main Military Council and the people's commissar, hundreds of posts of unit and formation chiefs were left unfilled, thus depriving military units of leaders, leaving headquarters without workers capable of performing their tasks. This position of comrade. Blucher explained by the absence of people (which does not correspond to the truth) and thereby cultivated indiscriminate distrust of all the command and command personnel of the Far Eastern Red Banner Front. As for combat

training, everything in the Voroshilov order was true. One of the participants in the battles near Lake Khasan S. Sharonov recalled: "Before the Khasan events, I served in the 120th Infantry Regiment of the 40th Infantry Division. There was little combat training. In 1937–1938, many commanders were taken away. The command of the division was completely beheaded: commander Vasnetsov, commissar Rudenko, chief of staff Stahl, chief of artillery, chief medical officer and his wife, a medical officer, were arrested. In the shelf - the same picture. We, ordinary fighters, sometimes did not know who to believe. They were drawn only to the political instructor Matveev, a real Bolshevik, still of the Red Guard temper. He was also taken away, and then returned. We asked him when

to throw combat grenades, all wooden and wooden? You could ask him such questions, we knew. And Matveev answered: "To throw a grenade for you, but for the state it will cost a cow." He thought about it and added: "Yes, you will still fight." As we know, we had to fight very soon. Meanwhile, on July 28,

on the very eve of the start of full-scale fighting, Mekhlis telegraphed Stalin: "I fired two hundred and fifteen political workers, a significant part of them were arrested. But the cleansing of the political apparatus, especially of the lower levels, is far from being completed by me. I think that it is impossible for me to leave Khabarovsk without at least a rough understanding of the command staff. Blucher's position in connection with the incident at the height of Zaozernaya is more than strange, pouring water on the Japanese mill. Blucher is extremely ambivalent about the incident at the height of Zaozernaya. He takes the same ambivalent position on a number of other important issues. Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish when a commander or a masked person is speaking in front of you. Lev Zakharovich had to finish the "showdown" with the command staff and with the "man in the mask" after the Hassan battles.

How did events develop on the Soviet-Manchurian border? On July 29, the Japanese attacked the Bezmyannaya height, adjacent to Zaozernaya, on Soviet territory, killing five border guards. The approaching company of the Red Army forced them to retreat. On July 31, Japanese troops occupied Zaozernaya and Bezmyannaya, pushing out Soviet border posts from there. The attacks of units of the Special Far Eastern Army on the heights captured by the Japanese began only on August 2, when the enemy had already managed to dig in and equip firing positions. Blucher, who still hoped for a peaceful settlement of the incident, was blamed for the delay. On August 1, 1938, an unpleasant conversation took place over a direct wire between Stalin, Molotov and Voroshilov with Blucher. Stalin was indignant: "Tell me, Blucher, why is the order of the People's Commissar of Defense to bombard our entire territory occupied by the Japanese, including the Zaozernaya height, with aircraft?"

"I report," Blucher answered. The aircraft is ready to take off. Departure delayed due to adverse weather conditions. This minute Rychagov (commander of the Air Force of the Far Eastern Front. - **B.S.**) ordered, regardless of anything, to raise aircraft into the air and attack. Aviation is now rising in

air, but I am afraid that in this bombardment we, apparently, will inevitably touch both our units and the Korean villages. Stalin

did not care about the possible losses of the Red Army from the actions of his own aviation, nor, moreover, the victims among some Koreans, whom the same Lyushkov quite recently, as potential Japanese spies, safely deported to Central Asia from the Soviet side of the border. And he asked menacingly: "Tell me, Comrade Blucher, honestly: do you have a desire to really fight the Japanese? If you do not have such a desire, say it directly, as befits a communist; and if there is a desire, I would think that you should go to the place immediately. I do not understand your fear of bombarding the Korean population, as well as the fear that the aviation will not be able to fulfill its duty due to the fog. Who forbade you not to offend the Korean population in the conditions of a military skirmish with the Japanese? .. What does some kind of cloud cover mean for Bolshevik aviation if it really wants to defend the honor of its Motherland. Waiting for an answer".

Blucher had no choice but, reluctantly, to report: "The aviation has been ordered to rise, and the first group will take to the air at eleven twenty - fighters. Rychagov promises to have attacking aircraft at 14 o'clock. Mazepov and I will fly out in an hour and a half, and if Bryandinskiy flies earlier, we will fly to Voroshilov together. We accept your instructions for execution and will carry them out with Bolshevik precision. To hell with it, with

the fog. There are no fortresses that the Bolsheviks could not take! And it does not matter that several planes may crash, and bombs will fall on the heads of the Red Army. If only to fulfill Stalin's order, otherwise the marshal would certainly not be blown off his head.

The Soviet offensive, launched on August 2, bogged down. Artilleryman S. Sharonov recalled: "By the beginning of the fighting, I served as the commander of an anti-tank battery gun. We were attached to the 7th company of the 3rd battalion of the 120th rifle battalion. True, the guns were not used for their intended purpose - the Japanese did not use tanks. Our division advanced from the south in the direction of the hills of Machine Gun and Zaozernaya in a narrow corridor (in some places its width did not exceed 200 meters) between the lake and the border. The big difficulty was that it was strictly forbidden to shoot across the border and cross it. The density in this corridor was

terrible, the fighters went rampart after rampart. I saw it well from my point of view. A lot went down there. From our company, for example, 17 people remained

alive. Captain Storozhenko, the commander of the battalion that attacked Zaozernaya from the south, says the same thing: "In front of us lay a space of 150 meters, completely braided with wire and under crossfire. In the same position were our units advancing through the northern approach to Bezmyannaya-We could deal with the presumptuous enemy much faster if they violated the border and took possession of the trenches, bypassing them along the Manchurian territory (in the Khasan region, the borders of three countries converged - the USSR, Manchuria and Korea - **B.S.**). But our units exactly followed the order of the command and acted within their territory.

Stalin wanted to demonstrate to the world the strength of the Red Army and counted on a quick and bloodless victory, by no means intending to start a full-scale war with Japan. Therefore, the Red Army was ordered not to cross beyond the Zaozernaya border. But the mini-blitzkrieg failed. The Japanese, feeling like winners, offered to settle the dispute amicably and return to the positions that the parties occupied on the morning of July 11th. On August 4, Shigemitsu handed over these proposals to Litvinov. However, the Soviet People's Commissar stated: "By restoring the situation, I meant the situation that existed before July 29, that is, until the date when the Japanese troops crossed the border and began to occupy the Bezmyannaya and Zaozernaya heights."

The next day, Voroshilov sent a directive to Blucher and his chief of staff, Grigory Mikhailovich Stern, where he allowed the attack on Zaozernaya to use a detour **from** the flanks across the state border line. The leadership of the operation was now entrusted to Stern. Already after the fighting ended, Grigory Mikhailovich, in order to justify the heavy losses, wrote in Pravda: "The possibility of any kind of maneuver for the Red Army units was completely absent. It was possible to attack only directly in the forehead of the Japanese positions. Of course, he kept silent about permission to invade to bypass enemy positions on Manchurian territory. In Soviet times, this circumstance was the strictest state secret.

This is how the new offensive of the Red Army is characterized in the "Brief Description of the Khasan Events", compiled by the Headquarters of the Border and Internal Troops of the Far Eastern Border District: "Since the issue of invading enemy territory was positively resolved, the right flank of the advancing units of the 32nd Infantry Division captured the height of Chernaya, and the left flank of the 40th Infantry Division - Homoku (the latter - on Manchurian territory. - **B.S.**). Due to bad weather, the aircraft's departure was delayed, and the infantry offensive actually began at about 17:00. Around midnight, units of the 118th Infantry Regiment of the 32nd Infantry Division reached the southern part of the ridge of the Zaozernaya height and hoisted a red flag on it. The enemy managed to keep the northern part of the ridge of the Zaozernaya height and the ridge of the Bezymyannaya height behind him that day. In fact, as the scheme preserved in the archive proves, the flag was hoisted on the top of Zaozernaya, and several tens of meters lower, on the southern slope of the hill. Before the armistice, the Soviet troops failed to take any of the heights, although the attacks continued on the 7th and 8th. After the end of the fighting, Lieutenant of the 95th Infantry Regiment Kulikov told the commission of the People's Commissariat of Defense: "On August 8, units of the 95th joint venture launched an attack on the defending enemy on the heights of Chernaya and Bezymyannaya, but those were not taken by our units. The heights are occupied after the armistice, that is, on August 11 or 12 at night. Until the moment of the armistice, the Chernaya and Bezymyannaya heights were occupied by Japanese troops. Also, the Japanese remained on the heights of Machine Gun and Bogomolnaya located on Soviet territory until August 15. And about Zaozernaya, there

was an embarrassment with the military. Commissar of the 118th Infantry Regiment N. Bondarenko testified: "When occupying the Zaozernaya height, I told the radio operator to go down and transmit either by radio or by telephone to the headquarters of the 40th division that the Zaozernaya height was occupied by parts of our division, Whether this was transmitted by the

radio operator to the headquarters of the division, I do not know. The commissioner hesitated. False information was transmitted and went for a walk through the authorities right up to Moscow itself. On August 8, Izvestia published a message from the headquarters of the 1st (Primorsky)

troops, firmly occupying our border points. Two days later, an equally fantastic communiqué appeared: "On August 9, Japanese troops again launched a series of attacks on the Zaozernaya height, occupied by our troops. Japanese troops were driven back with heavy losses for them. But the Chekists refuted the military in secret reports. On August 14, state security lieutenant Chulichkov reported: "In fact, the Zaozernaya height was not completely taken, but only the southeastern slopes, the crest of the northern part of the height and its northeastern slopes were in the hands of the Japanese. The Japanese were on the northern part of the Zaozernaya ridge from August 6 to August 13 and occupied the command points of the height ... "And the next day, Chulichkov's colleague Althausen told Frinovsky:" Yesterday, August 14, Stern was given the text of your telegram to Comrade Yezhov on the issue of disinformation by the shtakor about the occupation heights Zaozernaya and Nameless. Already at the beginning of the reception of the text of the telegram, Stern called me to the telegraph office and attacked me to the point of insults. Then he reported to Comrade Voroshilov that I had always been unfriendly to the actions of the corps (the 40th and 32nd rifle divisions and the 2nd mechanized brigade that attacked the Bezymyanny and Zaozernaya hills and the 2nd mechanized brigade were merged into the 39th rifle corps, which was commanded by Stern. - **B.S.**) and raised the issue of dismissal (the bearer o

The conclusions of the Chekists were fully confirmed by the joint Soviet-Japanese commission, which visited Zaozernaya on the morning of the 12th, the day after the armistice was concluded. The military and diplomats who were part of the commission stated that "in view of the special situation that has arisen in the northern part of the ridge of the Zaozernaya height, which is expressed in excessive convergence - up to five meters - of parts of both sides", it is necessary to come to the following agreement: "From 20 o'clock on August 12 as the main forces of the Japanese army and the main forces of the Red Army in the northern part of the ridge of the Zaozernaya height should be taken back at a distance no closer than 80 meters from the ridge. In fact, the parties returned to the situation on August 11, leaving the crest of the hill as a kind of neutral zone. The Japanese, without any disputes, cleared the Soviet hills Bezymyannaya and Machine-gun, which they did

not pretend to retain. Soviet losses, according to official figures published only in 1993, amounted to 792 people killed and 2752 wounded,

Japanese, respectively, - 525 and 913, i.e. 2-3 times less. Following the results of the Khasan battles, Voroshilov rightly noted in his order: "The combat training of the troops, headquarters and command staff of the front turned out to be at an unacceptably low level. The military units were pulled apart and unfit for combat; the supply of military units is not organized. It was found that the Far Eastern Theater was poorly prepared for war (roads, bridges, communications). The same was said at the meeting of the commanding and political staff of the Posyetsky border detachment, and not only in relation to the border guards, but also to the field troops of the Red Army. According to the notes of Brigadier Commissar K.F. Telegin, the main reasons for the failures were that the troops "stretched out along the front, and during the battle they grouped in unequipped positions. Communication is only telephone, after the loss of it a lot of manpower was used up. There was no link between units, they even fired at their tanks. The military commissar of the 40th Infantry Division was afraid to take responsibility for the mobilization of floating units to drop cargo to the front ("what if I wreck Putin?"). The county sent F-1 fans, but they could not use them. In the beginning, the field units worked without code. The field units from the New Village to Zaozernaya abandoned their satchels and machine guns. They neglected the bayonet fight. They did not engage in combat training, because they turned into economic commanders (this is where the "collective farm corps" invented by Blucher backfired. - **B.S.**). We harvest hay, firewood, vegetables, we carry out construction, we wash linen."

It is curious that the events of Khasan did not survive and their formal culprit - the head of the engineering service of the Posyet border detachment Vasily Venevitin. On August 8, 1938, he was shot by a Red Army soldier by mistake due to a mess with passwords: either Venevitin gave the old password, or they forgot to tell the soldier a new one. Was this death so accidental? Haven't Frinovsky's people tried to remove an unwanted witness who could someday tell who exactly ordered him to shoot at the Japanese gendarmes? Lyushkov, while in Tokyo, very accurately

predicted the arrest of Blucher even before the events at Lake Khasan. Genrikh Samoylovich claimed: "A group of traitors was at the headquarters of the Far Eastern Army and included

such people close to Blucher as Jan Pokus, Gulin, Vasnetsov, Kropachev and others. They tried to involve Blucher in politically dangerous conversations. Blucher, without our permission, showed them the confessions of the arrested conspirators. After his arrest, Gulin told me that after Pokus was recalled to Moscow, Blucher, drinking with him, Gulin, scolded the NKVD for the arrests, and also scolded Voroshilov, Lazar Kaganovich and others. Blucher admitted to Gulin that before Rykov was eliminated, he was associated with him and often received from that letter that the "rightists" want to see him, Blucher, at the head of the Red Army. I believe that this is a rather revealing fact for clarifying Blucher's true feelings. In general, Blucher loves power very much. He is no longer satisfied with the role he plays in the Far East, he wants more. He considers himself superior to Voroshilov. It is politically doubtful that he is satisfied with the overall situation, although he is very cautious. In the army, he is more popular than Voroshilov. Blucher does not like military commissars and military councils, which limit his right to give orders. At the 18th Party

Congress in March 1939, Stalin touched upon the Khasan battles: "What do the events at Lake Khasan say, for example, if not that the cleansing of Soviet organizations from spies, murderers, pests is the surest means of strengthening them?" Here Iosif Vissarionovich clearly used the initial preparation made even before the start of the conflict. He hoped that by quickly defeating the Japanese on Zaozernaya and Bezymyannaya, the Red Army would demonstrate to the whole world that the repressions of 1937-38 had not weakened, but strengthened its power. Everything turned out exactly the opposite. The world began to suspect that the Soviet armed forces were not at all as powerful and invincible as propaganda suggests. Inside the country, of course, newspapers and radio were able to present the defeat at Khasan as a victory, but Stalin still had to keep silent at the congress about the fact that after the "successful defeat of the Japanese invaders", the commander of the Far Eastern Army was arrested and beaten to death during the investigation. Abroad, they immediately noticed that after the Khasan battles, the name of Blucher disappeared from the pages of newspapers.

How did the fall of the OKDVA commander happen? Back in early July, in connection with the upcoming events, they arrived in the Far East

Frinovsky and Mekhlis. After the end of the clashes at Hassan, they had to conduct a "debriefing". On August 16, Frinovsky telegraphed Yezhov: "I inform you that, despite repeated attempts on 13. VIII. 38 to talk with the defendant (Blyukher was now designated by this specific police term, which meant: he was already taken by the Chekists into development as a suspect in a political crime. - **B.S.**) by phone, this did not work. He was at the apartment, did not receive anyone and did not answer phone calls. 14. VIII. With. I still managed to call the defendant to the phone and ask him about his health. Immediately agreed to meet him in the evening. At 2 o'clock, the person involved on the phone asked me to call on his house in order to talk about the information received from the intelligence department

of the front about the concentration of new units by the Japanese in Manchuria and Korea. Arriving at him, I found with him the deputy commander Filatov, the head of the intelligence department and the head of the 1st department of the front. The figurant was nervous, he smelled strongly,

Probably after drinking.

After the official conversation, left alone, he spoke with the defendant on the topic of his illness, said that now was not the time to get sick, that his absence from work had a harmful effect on all issues related to the implementation of the order of the people's commissar to bring parts of the front troops into combat readiness. The conversation was conducted in the most comradely tones, trying to call the defendant to frankness. He complained to me about his exceptionally depressed state, increased nervousness, loss of sleep.

In his written report, Frinovsky came to a disappointing conclusion, which for Blucher was tantamount to a harsh sentence: "The Far Eastern theater is not completely ready for a big war in operational and mobilization terms, and the troops of this theater, for a number of reasons, are in a state of reduced combat capability. Moral decay, separation from the army, criminal inactivity and internal political sympathy for the right-wing commander of the front, Blucher. The current state of the Far Eastern Front does not give any relative guarantees that it will be able to fulfill the task of the war in the Far East. Requires the adoption of the most energetic and

decisive measures to bring the front into a combat-ready state. It is necessary to resolve the issue of replacing the front commander. At the end of August, this issue was resolved: Blucher was removed from his post and left at the disposal of the people's commissar of defense. But I'm getting ahead of myself a little.

During a conversation on August 14, Blucher promised Frinovsky to start work on the 15th. But just on that day, he was summoned to Moscow. The commander was required to take with him materials related to the Khasan events. Frinovsky informed Vasily Konstantinovich about this unpleasant news and asked him to give the appropriate orders. Blucher became agitated: "I have no one to give orders. I feel removed from the affairs, and it is unlikely that my former deputies will fulfill them. Mikhail Petrovich tried to reassure the person involved: "No one removed you from office. Therefore, we must calmly

prepare for departure to Moscow and collect the necessary documents. Blucher, however, continued to be nervous: "Tell me, what caused such an unexpected call to Moscow?" Frinovsky replied that he did not know, with a slight twist of his soul. Mikhail Petrovich probably guessed that Blucher would soon become a client of his department with Yezhov. Vasily Konstantinovich, meanwhile, continued to guess: "Probably, the point is the disinformation that took place in the reports to Moscow, especially about the withdrawal of the 40th division and the suspension of the offensive until reinforcements arrived." Frinovsky did not dissuade him. Blucher's son Vsevolod on November 21, 1963, in a letter to his school friend Lyudmila Aleksandrovna Raskova, told how Vasily Konstantinovich spent his last days in the Far East: "After the events on

Lake Khasan, my father returned to Khabarovsk in a very serious condition. Despite the fact that he defeated the Japanese (in fact, it was rather the Japanese who defeated the Soviet units moved against them. - **B.S.**), he felt and understood that some incomprehensible monstrous machine of slander had worked. He gathered us: me, my wife, children, and Pavel, his brother, a fighter pilot, and, having a frank conversation, said that he was waiting for arrest and would like to take us away from this misfortune. So, he offered me to go to Leningrad to my own mother and to Zoya, my sister. Could he have guessed then what would happen to everyone! .. "

On August 18, Blucher left for Moscow, where on the 31st he was removed from his post at a meeting of the Main Military Council. On September 1, he sent a telegram: "I will not return to Khabarovsk. Urgently gather the whole family in Moscow. Health is very bad. Hello Pavel. Vasya". The phrase about health hinted not only at the sick state of the marshal, but also at the precariousness of his position. Vasily Konstantinovich made it clear that the threat of arrest remains quite real. The case

was drawing to a close. Glafira Lukinichna recalled: "On September 15 or 16 we came to see him. He said: "There was the Politburo, there was the Chief Boss. The tone was set by the Commissar. Unfairly criticized for Hassan. When they gave me the word to justify myself, I refused: "Why?"

Then he had a conversation with Stalin in the presence of Poskrebyshev. It was about some kind of map, with the content of which Vasily Konstantinovich did not agree. Then Stalin told Poskrebyshev: "Let Blucher introduce the amendments." My husband got it right. Like a distracting maneuver of a predator about to pounce on its prey. At the same time, they lulled his vigilance in every way, tried to dispel even the slightest suspicion. This was their method. Why did Voroshilov, who had recently expressed a clear dislike for her husband, nevertheless persistently suggested that the whole family should occupy his personal dacha in the south, Bocharov Ruchey (now it is the residence of the Russian President. - B.S.) ? While, they say, you, Vasily Konstantinovich, rest and gain strength, we will then look for you a position that would correspond to your marshal rank. I had to obey. There, near Sochi, Blucher was already

completely enlightened and completely withdrawn into himself. On the morning of October 22, he went to the

children, played with little Vasilin (after the arrest of his father and mother, the baby was sent to an orphanage, where his traces were lost. - **B.S**). I, seeing how bad he looked, invited him to lie down again, and I myself began to feed the baby. Suddenly, the front door banged loudly, and I saw four big men in dark suits burst into the house, heading straight for the room where my husband was resting. Our personal guard Lemeshko wanted to block my way. But I looked at him so that he backed off. When I ran into

room, Vasily Konstantinovich was already sitting on the bed, and the bloodhounds from the NKVD were frantically shaking his clothes. When they saw me, two grabbed my hands and took me out.

Everything happened very quickly. They put me in one car, then they took me out and pushed Vasily Konstantinovich into another - he was already in a shirt and breeches. Together with him, they seized his younger brother Pavel, who at that time was resting with us. Immediately our "cortege" set off towards the station. There, in a dead end, there was already a carriage prepared for us, where we were placed in different compartments. These were the last moments when I saw Vasily Konstantinovich. All the two days that we were driving to Moscow, they did not take their eyes off us, and I heard only my husband's heavy cough. I did not see how they were taken out of the car at the Moscow railway station. And they immediately took me to the Lubyanka." In 1956, when the issue of Blucher's rehabilitation was being decided, she was informed by the Party Control Committee that in Moscow Vasily Konstantinovich was taken to the Lefortovo prison, famous for its shoulder cases. It was there, as well as in the Sukhanovskaya special police unit of the NKVD, that the torture and beatings of those under investigation took place, who were forced to confess to the most terrible crimes by torture.

Glafira Lukinichna told the writer Vladimir Karpov a little more about Blucher's last days: "When he returned from the battle area, he was very gloomy (and there was reason. - **B.S.**). His mood was depressed. Sometimes he said: "Everyone betrayed, everyone sold." In some of his reflections, he had in mind the ongoing arrests and the behavior of Mekhlis. He told me that Mekhlis interfered with his orders, gave commands that could damage the fighting, and he canceled these commands, which further aggravated his relationship with Mekhlis.

Vasily Konstantinovich arrived from the combat area on August 12. After a conversation took place in Moscow with the Japanese ambassador about the cessation of hostilities, Blucher was summoned to Moscow. He didn't know why he was called there. I went by train. Soon I received a telegram from him in which he wrote that I should immediately leave for Moscow with my children and take with me only the most necessary things. I quickly got ready, the children only went to school on the first of September, I had to interrupt their studies. And here we are all - Seva, Nina, Vaira,

little Vasily with a nanny, me and Vasily's brother Pavel. He was a squadron commander, pilot captain, and his wife Lida. We all went to Moscow together. We drove for a long time, the road is long, difficult. We arrive in Moscow, no one meets us at the station. We stood on the platform in bewilderment. But soon the marshal's assistant appeared, he was just too late. We were taken to the Metropol Hotel. Two rooms

were prepared there, in one I was accommodated with Vasily Konstantinovich, and in the other all the children were settled. When I entered my husband's room, he said: "I'm sorry, I wanted to meet, but I feel so bad, I couldn't go, you know, the situation is like that."

From further conversations, I learned that everywhere he was thrown mud at him, that, apparently, his fate was decided, because colleagues in the People's Commissariat of Defense avoid meeting him or pretend not to see him. In general, the crowd is afraid, and some even peck, - he grinned. He spoke about the meeting of the Politburo, at which Voroshilov and Mekhlis poured mud at him. "In general, we will not return to the Far East. They gave me the word. Just like the last word to the defendant. But I understood that this was no longer necessary, and refused, everything was clear, there was nothing to say, it was useless.

At this meeting (I suspect that, over the years, Glafira Lukinichna got a little confused, and in reality everything happened not at the Politburo, but at the Main Military Council. - B.S.) Stalin, when the conversation turned to the railway under construction, asked Blucher: "And what do you think? Do you agree with this outline of it?"

Blucher was always honest, remained honest even in that case, said that strategically such a line of the road was wrong, and, in his opinion, such and such should be introduced

changes.

Stalin immediately told Poskrebyshchev: "Correct, as Comrade Blucher suggests." Now,

after everything that happened, it is absolutely clear that the scenario was developed a long time ago, everything that happened next confirms the existence of this scenario.

After all that had happened, suddenly Voroshilov invited Vasily Konstantinovich to go on vacation in Sochi with the whole family, to his dacha. He does not go himself, but he offers us to rest there, a little

calmed down after all the unpleasant conversations. We went there. Anxiety, of course, did not leave us. There was something mysterious about this invitation. And even more alerted such an episode at our departure. Blucher had a guarantor, Iustin Maksimovich Krysko. He helped us get ready at home, pack things, send luggage. But when we went to the station and got into the carriage, for some reason he did not appear. And he had to go with us. At first they thought it was too late. But he did not come to Sochi either. Motivated by some inner suspicion, I gave a telegram to his wife and asked him to respond not to our address, but to the main post office, poste restante, in Sochi, to my maiden name - Bezverkhova. And now I receive a telegram from her in just two words: "Krysko has been arrested." Blucher said; "So as not to

interfere." In general, we lived in the country, feeling doomed, not knowing only when and how the final blow would occur, but we felt its inevitability. We lived alone in the country, no one went to us, we did not go to anyone. There was only a guard with us all the time, his name was Lemeshko, he seemed to be guarding us all the time, in fact, he made sure that none of us went anywhere. At the dacha Voroshilov had a luxurious billiards. Playing this billiards, Vasily Konstantinovich once stopped, spread his arms and, pointing to the luxury that surrounded us, said: "This is a sophisticated mockery."

One night he told me: "If something happens to me, you will not be touched." Was naive. On October 22, I

was busy in the kitchen, feeding the children. Suddenly, four healthy men in civilian clothes quickly burst into the house. We ran through the corridors. And straight into Vasily Konstantinovich's room, into his bedroom. Lemeshko opened the door for them. He stood at the kitchen door, not letting me out of it. But I saw everything. Vasily Konstantinovich was sitting on the bed in his undershirt, and those who had come were doing a search. Then I saw how they took my husband. He was without a tunic, in an undershirt, trousers, and boots. Then, immediately, they came back for me. When they took me out, I saw that there was a car in front and my husband was in it, they put me in the second one. And right there, brother Vasily Konstantinovich Pavel was brought into the third car. There were five cars in total (NKVD officers did not spare state-owned gasoline. - **B.S.**). The children were left. All this was done in silence, no one said a word. They brought us to the station, put us in different compar

Konstantinovich has not been seen since. In Moscow, cars were immediately sent to the Lubyanka. I ended up in solitary confinement No. 66 and spent seven months in it.

After being removed from the post of commander, Blucher seriously feared arrest with all the ensuing consequences. Why didn't he at least follow Gamarnik's example and shoot himself? I think two factors played a role here. On the one hand, Vasily Konstantinovich did not want to injure his wife and children who were with him by suicide. On the other hand, in the soul of the marshal there was still a glimmer of hope that everything would work out, that political charges would not be brought against him, but that an honorary, albeit insignificant position in the People's Commissariat of Defense would be found. Therefore, perhaps, he did not advise his brother to rest together at the Voroshilov dacha. Vasily Konstantinovich was not completely sure that he was doomed.

While Blucher was waiting in Moscow for the arrival of his family, the machine was already running. On September 10, 1938, Ivan Fedorovich Fedko, deputy people's commissar of defense, commander of the 1st rank, testified against Vasily Konstantinovich. By that time, the investigators had already broken the commander. In July of the 38th, the head of the Special Department of the NKVD, Fedorov, wrote to Frinovsky: "The day before yesterday I held face-to-face confrontations with Fedko, at which the arrested Yegorov, Uritsky, Khoroshilov, Pogrebnoy, Smirnov P.A. and Belov denounced Fedko, but he refused everything. I gave him the above-mentioned confrontations, sent him to Lefortovo, stuffed his face, put him in a punishment cell. In his testimony today, he names Meretskov, Zhiltsov and several other people. He was outrageous. And today he said that he thanks the investigation for teaching him to tell the truth." By the time when evidence was required against Blucher, Ivan Fedorovich had already learned very well to "tell the truth." After the arrest of Vasily Konstantinovich, he and Fedko held a confrontation on October 28, 1938, at which the commander memorized repeated: "I established criminal anti-Soviet ties with Blucher in November 1935, when the Military Council was working." Vasily Konstantinovich, to whom they had not yet had time to apply physical measures, indignantly declared: "Shame on you, Fedko. Everything that Fedko said, I categorically deny.

On the same day, Blucher confronted the arrested former member of the Military Council of the OKDVA G.D. Khakhanyan, who testified about the conspiratorial activities of Vasily Konstantinovich. Blucher again denied everything. Face-to-face confrontations and interrogation of Blucher were conducted by Beria himself. Lavrenty Pavlovich, who had just been appointed Yezhov's deputy, was soon to be replaced by the "steel people's commissar", one of the charges against which was to be the falsification of criminal cases and "excesses" in the fight against "enemies of the people". If Stalin nevertheless decided to arrange a show trial over Yezhov, then Blucher seemed an ideal candidate as one of the defendants: Vasily Konstantinovich could be accused of indiscriminately beating OKDVA cadres. Almost immediately after his arrest and even before the first

confrontations, Blucher was severely beaten. The marshal, who himself sent Tukhachevsky, Yakir and others to death, understood perfectly well that admitting guilt would still not save him from the death penalty. And the Chekists immediately began to physically treat the arrested person, not hoping that he would voluntarily confess to imaginary crimes. It was no coincidence that Blucher's neighbor in

the Lubyanka cell turned out to be the former head of the NKVD Directorate for the Sverdlovsk Region, D.M. Dmitriev. After his arrest, as part of a gradually begun campaign to gradually replace Yezhov's people with those of Beria, he played the unrespectable role of a "brood hen" and persuaded the marshal to confess everything in the illusory hope of saving his own life (conversations in the cell were recorded on a tape recorder). On October 26, Vasily Konstantinovich told Dmitriev: "Physical impact. As if nothing hurts, but in fact everything hurts. Yesterday I spoke with Beria, obviously, there will be a conversation with the People's Commissar next.

"With Yezhov?" Dmitriev asked. "Yes," Blucher confirmed. And he groaned: "Oh, I can't move, feeling overwhelmed.

"- You shout one more night, and everything will be fine," then Whether showing participation, whether scoffing, the Chekist noticed.

On the same day, the duty officer warned Vasily Konstantinovich: "Prepare for departure, in an hour you will go to Lefortovo."

(So, G.L. Bezverkhova was mistaken when she claimed that her husband was taken directly from the station to Lefortovo; first, the marshal was taken to the Lubyanka, and he got acquainted with the Lefortovo meat grinder only three

days later. - B.S.) . "Where to start?" Blucher asked.

"Comrade Beria told you what is required of you, or you will go to Lefortovo in an hour," the duty officer threatened. - "You announced? Yes?" "It's

been announced," the marshal said wistfully. - "Well, here I sit and thinking. What to invent? You can't even find it."

Dmitriev sympathetically explained to Blucher: "The question has been settled earlier. The decision was when you were arrested. What was it to arrest you? Lots of evidence. Once it was - there is nothing to deny. Now we need to find a mitigating environment. And you make it heavier by going to Lefortovo. "I wasn't spying," Blucher justified

himself, but in an experienced Chekist, such childish babble only caused a smile. Dmitriev knew perfectly well how spies are made

of those under investigation, he himself had to deal with this more than once: "- Since people are talking, then there are grounds." "I'm not a spy," Blucher argued. "You don't pretend

to be innocent," Dmitriev continued to convince.

"You can come and say that I confirm and declare that this is true. Let me tell you everything tomorrow morning. And that's all. If you have decided, then you must now do all this. "No one recruited me," Vasily Konstantinovich timidly objected. Such a trifle did not embarrass

the former chief of the Sverdlovsk NKVD. He reassured the marshal - the investigator

would help: "How were you recruited, when were you recruited, on what grounds were you recruited. This is the straight line." "I can now say that I was to blame," Blucher began to hesitate. "Not to blame, but was in the organization,"

Dmitriev corrected,

who knew that the authorities love concreteness.

"I was not part of the organization," Blucher exploded. "No, I can't say."

"You better think about what you will say to Beria so that it is not empty talk," Dmitriev bent his line. "Who talked to you about this? Who told you and to whom did you give consent? Blucher tried to remember something specific: "This is a letter of offer, I

did not answer it. I handed over a copy of the letter to Deribas "(to the head of the NKVD Directorate for the Khabarovsk Territory, who was arrested in the summer of 1937; as you can understand, this is either a letter from someone whom Stalin and Yezhov considered to be part of Bukharin's never-existing "right-wing Trotskyist bloc", Yagoda, Rykov, and others, or about a letter from some Japanese representatives - **B.S.**). Dmitriev explained: "- Deribas informed. You must say." "What am I going to say?" - in desperation turned to a cellmate

Vasily Konstantinovich.

"What an eccentric you are, by God," Dmitriev smiled sympathetically. - "You know (the name of the prisoner in the tape recording was not deciphered. - **B.S.**). For three months he sat in Butyrki, did not say anything. When they gave him Lefortovo, he immediately said.

"What shall I say?" Blucher repeated lostly. "Listen to me," the former Chekist

confidently continued, ignoring the interlocutor's objections, "I

consider you a Japanese spy, especially since you have such a failure. I'll tell you more, the fact is proven that you are a spy. What, do you need to go through the Lefortovo prison cell? At least think."

But Vasily Konstantinovich did not want to "think right" and continued to "build himself innocent." He was sent to Lefortovo. "Physical impact" at Lubyanka was supposed to seem like health procedures compared to Lefortovo

torture.

I. Rusakovskaya, who was in the same cell with the second wife of Marshal G.P. Kolchugina, told the commission of the Central Committee of the CPSU: "From conversations with Kolchugina-Blyukher, it turned out that the reason for her depressed mood was a confrontation with the former Marshal Blyukher (no one deprived Vasily Konstantinovich of the title, but the definition is very accurate: "former marshal" (for the Lefortovo executioners Vasily Konstantinovich was already a finished man. - **B.S.**), who, according to Kolchugina-Blucher, was beaten beyond recognition

and, being almost in a state of insanity, in her presence he said monstrous things about himself. I remember that Kolchugina Blucher, speaking with horror about the terrible, torn appearance that Blucher had at the confrontation, threw the phrase: "You understand, he looked as if he had been under a tank."

The former head of the medical unit of the Lefortovo prison, Rosenblum, told the KGB in 1956 that she had provided medical assistance to Blucher under investigation. The face of the unfortunate man was bruised, there was a large bruise under the eye, and the sclera of the eye was filled with blood -

the blow was so strong. The former head of the Lefortovo prison, Zimin, said in 1957 that he himself saw how "Beria beat Blucher, and he not only beat him with his hands, but some special people with rubber truncheons came with him, and they, encouraged by Beria, tortured Blucher, moreover, he shouted loudly: "Stalin, do you hear how they torture me ?!". Beria, in turn, shouted: "Speak how you sold the East!" The same was

reported to the Central Committee of the CPSU by the former deputy of Zimin Kharkovets, who claimed that in front of him, Beria, together with Kobulov, beat Blucher with rubber truncheons. True, the Kharkivets seems to have added something about Kobulov. The eldest of the Kobulov brothers, Bogdan, in those days when the investigation into the Blucher case was underway, worked as Deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of Georgia, the youngest, Amayak, worked as First Deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of Ukraine. It is doubtful that Lavrenty Pavlovich would specially send one of the Kobulovs to Moscow to beat the recalcitrant marshal with a rubber club. But that Vasily Konstantinovich was beaten, and beaten hard, there is no doubt.

One of the former investigators of the NKVD on November 12, 1955, during interrogation, testified that when he saw the marshal for the first time on November 5 or 6, 1938, he "immediately drew attention to the fact that Blucher had been severely beaten the day before, for all his face was completely bruised and swollen. I remember that, looking at Blucher and seeing that his whole face was covered in bruises, Ivanov then told me that, apparently, Blucher had been hit hard.

"Tank" methods of interrogation finally gave the effect. Blucher confessed to having connections with the "rightists". Between 6 and 9 November he wrote

written testimony that he was preparing a military conspiracy. But he did not have time to confess to espionage in favor of Japan: he died on November 9, 1938, unable to withstand the beatings. The official diagnosis stated death as a result of blockage of the pulmonary artery by a thrombus formed in the veins of the pelvis. Was the fatal clot the result of continuous torture, or simply masked another, more frank diagnosis: death from a concussion or a fracture of

the skull, for example? Stalin was informed of Blucher's death. Iosif Vissarionovich ordered the body to be cremated. Former NKVD officer Golovlev told a commission of the Central Committee of the CPSU in 1963: "In our presence, Beria called Stalin, who invited him to come to the Kremlin. Upon returning from Stalin, Beria invited Merkulov, Mironov, Ivanov and me to his place, where he told us that Stalin offered to take Blucher to Butyrka prison for a medical examination and burn him in a crematorium. The leader did not even use the removal of Yezhov for the posthumous rehabilitation of the marshal, which followed two weeks after his death (Nikolai Ivanovich was arrested only in April 1939, and shot on February 4, 1940). Blucher was rehabilitated only 18 years later, on March 12, 1956, by a decision of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR "due to the absence of corpus delicti in his actions." Rehabilitated and his first two wives, sentenced to death, rehabilitated and the third, sent to the Gulag. The brother of Vasily Konstantinovich Pavel, who was shot in the 39th year, also turned out to be innocent. The investigation believed that it was on the plane of his brother that the marshal was going to flee to Japan (probably, the recent escape of their colleague Lyushkov strongly influenced the imagination of the Chekists). So why did

Stalin crack down on Blucher? Did he really suspect him of having links with the oppositionists? Was he afraid that not today, but tomorrow the marshal could become the head of the conspiracy? Or, perhaps, did he feel some kind of personal dislike for Vasily Konstantinovich? The latter, I will say right away, seems absolutely incredible. After all, Stalin and Blucher first met in a more or less narrow circle only shortly before the 37th year, when the Military Council sorted out the signals about shortcomings in the Special Far Eastern Army. And between the process of Tukhachevsky and the battles at Hassan, the marshal and the secretary general did not seem to meet at all. And how could Vasily arouse suspicion

Konstantinovich, who zealously eradicated sedition in the Far East? I think that

the main reason for the disgrace and death of Blucher was the failure of Hassan. As we have seen, the troops of the Far Eastern Front did not fight very well. It turned out that the Far Eastern warriors were poorly trained in actions as part of units. The individual training of fighters and commanders was also lame. The interaction of infantry with artillery and aviation was not up to par. Blucher himself showed indecision and actually retired from command. It became clear to Stalin that the marshal was not suitable for the role of commander in chief in the Far East. What to do? It was possible, of course, to send Blucher into actual retirement, inventing for him some honorary, but not of serious importance, position in the central apparatus of the People's Commissariat of Defense. In the end, Stalin did the same with Budyonny after the failures of Semyon Mikhailovich at the front, appointing him to an essentially operetta position, commander of the Red Army cavalry. Also, Voroshilov, who showed himself to be a worthless head of the military department and a mediocre commander, not only remained a member of the Politburo, but also received a nominal post of chief of the Central Headquarters of the partisan movement. So Blucher could be sent to lead future partisans. But Voroshilov and Budyonny were people personally close and devoted to Stalin, inextricably linked with the First Cavalry - the most mythologized Soviet propaganda of the Civil War army. Without the most extreme need to get rid of these marshals, Joseph Vissarionovich had no reason. Blucher is another matter. Stalin hardly knew him. If you appoint him to the position of a sinecure, you see, he will harbor a grudge that he, the honored hero of the Civil War, awarded the Order of Lenin, four Orders of the Red Banner and the Order of the Red Star, was neglected. And if, God forbid, some kind of crisis happens, no matter how Vasily Konstantinovich tries to take revenge for his resignation! We do not have irreplaceable people, but Blucher will no longer be of any use. It's easier and safer to shoot him.

Of the first five Soviet marshals, Blucher, in terms of his psychology, level of education and attitude to military affairs, was much closer to Voroshilov and Budyonny than to Tukhachevsky and Yegorov. He hardly

was interested in military theory, was little familiar with the new types of troops, especially with tank and motorized formations. Vasily Konstantinovich practically did not leave the circle of ideas of the Civil War, and, paradoxically, it was this military backwardness that killed him.

MIKHAIL TUKHACHEVSKY

THE YOUNGEST AND MOST EDUCATED MARSHAL

Mikhail Nikolaevich Tukhachevsky of the five marshals executed at various times by Stalin (the sixth was finished off by the heirs of Joseph Vissarionovich), was undoubtedly the most outstanding. He was born on February 4/16, 1893 in the Alexandrovskoye estate of the Dorogobuzh district of the Smolensk province in an impoverished landowner's family. This estate is 200 acres of mortgaged, re-mortgaged, not very fertile land. The Tukhachevskys were from the very impoverished nobles, who could hardly make ends meet. Tukhachevsky's mother, Mavra Petrovna Milohova (another spelling of the surname is Milehova), was herself from the peasants of the village of Knyazhino. Her father, out of poverty, was forced to give one of the five daughters into the service of the landowner-widow Sofya Valentinovna Tukhachevskaya. The widow's son, Nikolai Nikolaevich, fell in love with Mavra, by that time he was the only surviving man in the ancient family. From the marriage of a nobleman and a peasant woman, the future marshal was born. Nikolai Nikolayevich was a kind but impractical person. Daughters Ekaterina and Olga claim that the father "had advanced views for his time, free from noble arrogance." There is no doubt that he is free from class prejudices, since he married a poor peasant woman. Married for great love. The name Tukhachevsky is unique. All its

bearers were representatives of the same noble family, which had a common ancestor with the Counts Tolstoy back in the 13th century. This surname comes from the Turkic word Shgasu, meaning "standard-bearer, messenger or messenger."

In 1898, Aleksandrovskoye was sold for debts, and the Tukhachevskys moved into the possession of the mother of Nikolai Nikolayevich near the village of Vrazhskoye, Chembarsky district, Penza province. Mikhail entered the Penza gymnasium. Gymnasium friend Tukhachevsky V. Studensky recalled: "... The greatest interest for

we were represented by French wrestling. It was during these years that wrestlers began to perform in the circus, and we, high school students, imitating them and calling ourselves the name of this or that wrestler, arranged our wrestling championships. Misha performed under the name of Poddubny and had no equal in strength among us. And he was much taller than any of us. In addition to wrestling, we often engaged in weight lifting. Misha, who was then about 14 years old, easily did exercises with a weight. In the gymnasium, using Misha's strength, we, his comrades, often arranged such entertainment: several people hung on him, and he dragged us around the class, trying not to throw us off. Another classmate, V. G. Ukrainsky, confirms that Tukhachevsky stood out among his comrades with a strong physique and great physical strength, and "by his nature, he was firm in decisions, kept himself simple, willingly shared with all the acquired knowledge and enjoyed authority among his comrades. It should, however, be noted that he had little contact with high school students from an aristocratic and spiritual society. The guys from ordinary families, close to him, appreciated and respected him ... Misha loved gymnastics, he was strong ... He could, at the same time resting on the desk, immediately move several desks for a certain distance. Often fought, and not without success, with high school students. At the same time, Misha Tukhachevsky prevented disputes between his classmates from ending in a fight or reprisal against someone. He always stood up for the weak. And he tried to instill these humane qualities in others." In Vrazhsky they lived only in summer, and in winter - in

Penza, where children studied. According to the recollections of neighbors and friends, in Vrazhskoye the Tukhachevskys were already barely making ends meet, constantly experiencing an acute shortage of money. Mikhail stayed in the 1st Penza gymnasium from 1904 to 1909. In the gymnasium journals, unflattering entries for the future commander were preserved: "Despite his abilities, he studied poorly"; "Diligence - 3"; "Attention - 2"; "I missed 127 lessons in a year"; "Had 3 penalties for talking in class." And so on and so forth. As Tukhachevsky's classmate Sergey Stepanovich Ostrovsky recalled, in terms of development, Mikhail significantly surpassed the vast majority of his peers and he was simply bored to study at the gymnasium. Although individual objects loved and knew them very much

Fine. So, in French and German, Tukhachevsky spoke so freely that he subsequently aroused surprise among the French and German military and politicians. Interested in astronomy. Together with his brother Nikolai, Mikhail equipped a weather station in Vrazhskoye, and in the evenings he liked to look through a telescope at the starry sky. But the most serious problems arose with the law of God. At the teachers' council, the priest complained: "Mikhail Tukhachevsky is not engaged in the law of God." According to V.G. Ukrainian, the future marshal "did not believe in Christ and in the lessons of the law of God allowed some liberties in relation to teachers. For this, he was punished several times and even removed from the class."

In 1909 the Tukhachevskys moved to Moscow. Mikhail studied for two years at the 10th Moscow Gymnasium, and then persuaded his father to allow him to try his luck in the military field. On August 16, 1911, Tukhachevsky began his studies in the last, 7th grade of the 1st Moscow Empress Catherine II of the Cadet Corps.

The year of graduation of the future commander, 1912, was the year of the 100th anniversary of the Patriotic War of 1812. Accordingly, the topic of the graduation essay for the cadets was "Patriotic War and Its Heroes." They arranged an excursion to the Borodino field, but not a simple one, but in conditions close to combat: with reconnaissance, forced march, with field kitchens ... Tukhachevsky passed all the exams with excellent marks and on June 1, 1912 received the coveted certificate. His name was inscribed on a marble plaque. While still in the corps, Mikhail compiled a dictionary of proverbs and sayings related to military affairs: "A bold attack is half the victory", "Fight loves courage", "A strong army is a governor", "Know how to be a soldier in order to be a general". The young cadet dreamed of becoming a general.

Tukhachevsky's acquaintance with the Bolshevik N.N. dates back to 1912. Kulyabko, which soon grew into a great friendship. Nikolai Nikolayevich graduated from the Gnessin Musical College and began to study at the Conservatory with Professor N.S. Zhilyaev, thanks to whom he became a member of the house of the Tukhachevskys, who are not indifferent to music. Mikhail himself played the piano and the violin, and later became interested in making violins and even wrote a special manual "Information about primers and varnishes for violins." Later, he confessed to one of his colleagues: "There is nothing more beautiful than music. This is my second passion, after the military."

Both in the cadet corps and in the cadet school, Tukhachevsky remained a convinced atheist, although, having been taught by bitter experience in the Penza gymnasium, he did not publicly show his disbelief. The well-known musicologist, friend and biographer of the composer and pianist Sergei Taneyev, Leonid Sabaneyev, a member of the Tukhachevsky family, testified: Mikhail was a young man "very presumptuous, who felt himself born for great deeds", and sometimes "it had the character of boyishness for him: he acted in poses Napoleon, adopted a haughty expression on his face. Apparently, he was devoid of any principles whatever - here in him there was something from "Dostoevism", rather from "Stavroginism". He, apparently, was preparing to be a superman. Here, under the absence of principles, Sabaneyev, who is unfriendly to Tukhachevsky, undoubtedly means the absence of religious, moral, Christian principles.

On July 12, 1914, Mikhail Tukhachevsky graduated from the Alexander Military School first in academic performance and discipline. He was promoted to second lieutenant and, according to the rules, was given a free choice of duty station. Tukhachevsky, as the grandfather-general bequeathed, preferred the Semenovskiy Regiment to the Life Guards. According to Uncle Tukhachevsky, Colonel M.N. Balkashin, his nephew was going to continue his military education: "He was very capable and ambitious, he intended to make a military career, he dreamed of entering the Academy of the General Staff." And there, you see, there is a direct road to generals, if, what the hell is not joking, not to field marshals. In the meantime, the freshly minted second lieutenant, having received 300 rubles of state money for equipment - a considerable amount for the Tukhachevskys - went to Vrazhskoye on vacation. But the vacation had to be interrupted before the deadline: mobilization and war were declared. Tukhachevsky was forced to hastily catch up with his regiment, which had set out for the Warsaw area. The young lieutenant was appointed junior officer (currently - deputy commander) of the 7th company of the 2nd battalion. The company was commanded by an experienced warrior, Captain Veselago, who volunteered to participate in the Russo-Japanese War. Soon the regiment was transferred to the region of Ivangorod and Lublin against the Austro-Hungarian troops. On September 2, 1914, the company of Veselago and Tukhachevsky under the Vikmundovo farm near the town of Krzheshov crossed the San River along the bridge set on fire by the Austrians, and then safely returned.

and prisoners. The company commander for this feat received the Order of St. George 4th degree, the junior officer - the Order of St. Vladimir 4th degree with swords. Then other battles followed with the Austrians and the German units that came to their aid. Tukhachevsky distinguished himself several more times. His comrade in the regiment A.A. Tipolt, who commanded a platoon in the 6th company of the same 2nd battalion, recalled an incident that occurred in late September or early October 1914: "The regiment held positions not far from Krakow, on the right bank of the Vistula. The Germans fortified on the dominant left bank. In front of our battalion in the middle of the Vistula was a small sandy island. The officers often said that, they say, it would not be bad to get to the island and from there look out how the enemy defense was built, how many forces the Germans had ... Not bad, but how to do it? Misha Tukhachevsky silently listened to such conversations and stubbornly thought about something. And then one day he got hold of a small fishing boat, the sides of which barely rose above the water, in the evening he lay down in it, pushed off the shore and quietly swam. All alone, he spent the whole night on the island, part of the morning, and safely returned to our shore, delivering the very information that the regiment so

dreamed of. On February 19, 1915, the Semyonovsky regiment took up positions in the forest in front of the village of Vysokie Duzhi, located on the road between the cities of Lomzha and Kolno. During the day, the Germans attacked the trenches of the Semenovites after powerful artillery preparation, but they could not capture them. Then at night they launched a surprise attack, broke through at the junction of two companies and surrounded the 7th company. In hand-to-hand combat, she was almost completely destroyed. Tukhachevsky was more fortunate than the company commander, whom the enemy soldiers raised on bayonets. At the time of the attack, Mikhail Nikolayevich was sleeping in a shallow trench. Waking up, he tried to organize the resistance of his company, shot back from the attackers with a revolver, but was quickly knocked down, stunned and found himself captured. By order of the regiment dated February 27, 1915, Tukhachevsky, together with Veselago, were declared dead. Only a few months later, the family received a letter from Mikhail from Germany

through the Red Cross. His mother and sisters were overjoyed at his "resurrection". In letters to the sisters, Tukhachevsky advised to re-read The Tale of Igo

to escape from captivity. But it was by no means hunger that pushed Mikhail Nikolayevich, like many other captured officers, to escape. He wanted to continue fighting, he believed in victory over Germany and its allies, he was eager to show his military skills, to find his Toulon on the battlefields.

Many years later, Tukhachevsky admitted to the cousin of his second wife, who wrote under the pseudonym Lydia Nord: "I was very happy about the war ... I dreamed of great feats, but was captured. But even before the captivity, I had already received the Order of Vladimir with swords. In my heart I was very proud of this, but carefully concealed my feeling from others. And I was sure that I would deserve the St. George Cross."

Five times Tukhachevsky tried to escape from captivity. Four attempts ended in failure. Mikhail Nikolaevich later said to his sister-in-law: "The French officer, who was sitting with me in captivity in Ingolstadt, where I was brought after the fourth escape, when I again began to make escape plans, said: "You must be a maniac, are you really not enough unsuccessful attempts ..." But the failures of the first shoots did not discourage me, and I prepared for a new one. I hated the Germans, as a caged beast hates trainers. The reasoning of my comrades in captivity, foreign officers, about the reasons for the failures of the Russo-Japanese campaign and our defeats in this war, infuriated me. Tired of thinking about an escape plan, I rested by mentally reorganizing our army, creating another one that was supposed to bring Germany to its knees. And let the whole world feel the power of Russia. I made plans for military operations and led the armies into battle ... Maybe then I was on the verge of insanity ... "Later, Tukhachevsky had a chance to make his dream come true - to create a new mass army equipped with the most advanced technology.

Meanwhile, a revolution was brewing in Russia. Tukhachevsky foresaw it. Shortly before February 1917, he shared his thoughts on the future of the Russian monarchy with the French officer Fervak: "Yesterday, we, Russian officers, drank to the health of the Russian emperor. Or maybe this dinner was a memorial. Our emperor is a narrow-minded person... And many officers are tired of the current regime... However, a constitutional regime in the Western manner would be the end of Russia. Russia needs a firm, strong government..."

Seeing the weakness of the democratic Provisional Government that replaced the tsar, Mikhail Nikolaevich once told Fervak: "If Lenin is able to rid Russia of the rubbish of old prejudices and help it become an independent, free and strong power, I will follow him." On another occasion, he declared even more clearly: "I choose Marxism!" In the end, Tukhachevsky had an opportunity to escape

from captivity. On the basis of an international agreement, the prisoners were allowed to walk in the city, provided that they give a written commitment not to try to escape during the walks. A. V. Blagodatov, who was together with Tukhachevsky in the Ingolstadt camp (later Lieutenant General of the Soviet Army), describes the circumstances of the last, successful escape as follows: "Tukhachevsky and his comrade Captain of the General Staff Chernyavsky managed to somehow arrange that their documents were signed other. And one day they both fled. For six days the fugitives wandered through the forests and fields, hiding from the chase. And on the seventh they stumbled upon the gendarmes. However, the hardy and physically strong Tukhachevsky fled from his pursuers ... After some time, he managed to cross the Swiss border and thus return to his homeland. And Captain Chernyavsky was sent back to the camp. For a long time we did not know anything about the fate of Mikhail Nikolayevich

and were very worried about him. About a month after the escape, one of the Swiss newspapers read that the corpse of a Russian had been found on the shores of Lake Geneva, apparently from exhaustion. For some reason, everyone decided that it was Tukhachevsky. A memorial service was held in the camp. In the absence of a Russian priest, she was served by a French curate." So Tukhachevsky was buried

for the second time. Meanwhile, he kept his way to Paris, from there to London, and then by sea to Scandinavia and by train to Petrograd. In Tukhachevsky, the concept of honor was eroded very early. He fled from Ingolstadt, violating the word of an officer - the comedy with the substitution of signatures does not change the matter, and, perhaps, the episode itself with other people's signatures was invented in order to ennoble at least a little bit the not at all noble act of the future marshal. After all, Tukhachevsky could not help but understand that his escape would cause a tightening of the regime and a deterioration in the situation of other pri

less happy comrade Chernyavsky, before being returned to the camp, the gendarmes pretty much crushed in revenge for

meanness. On September 5/18, Tukhachevsky managed to cross the German-Swiss border. Then he moved from Switzerland to France. September 29 (October 12)

In 1917, exhausted by hungry wanderings, but not losing his presence of mind, the lieutenant appeared to the Russian military agent (in today's terminology - the military attaché) in Paris, General Count A.A. Ignatiev. This day is dated a letter from Ignatiev to London to a military agent, General N.S. Yermolov: "At the request of Lieutenant Tukhachevsky, who escaped from German captivity of the Guards Semenovskiy, I was ordered to give him money in the amount necessary for a trip to London. I also ask you not to refuse to help him in his further journey. Already on October 16, Tukhachevsky ended up in Petrograd, where he appeared to continue his service in the reserve battalion of the Semenovskiy regiment. And then he got a vacation home to improve his health. In Vrazhskiy, he was caught by the news of the October Revolution. Tukhachevsky returned to the capital on November 20. The soldiers elected a young and

determined second lieutenant as a company commander. Tukhachevsky, it seems, by that time had finally taken the side of the winners - the Bolsheviks. The old army was dead, Tukhachevsky saw it well. All hopes for the revival of the armed forces of Russia, the lieutenant-semenovets now associated with the party of Lenin.

From Petrograd, Tukhachevsky again returned to Vrazhskoye, where he helped his mother and sisters with the housework, in particular, he prepared enough firewood so that the family could survive the harsh winter.

Tukhachevsky arrived in Moscow at the beginning of March 1918, almost simultaneously with the Soviet government, who moved here from Petrograd, which was under the threat of a renewed German offensive. A close friend of Tukhachevsky N.N. Kulyabko stated: "We met again only in March 1918. He had already worked in the Military Department of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. And the IV Extraordinary All-Russian Congress of Soviets elected me a member of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. After the government moved from Petrograd to Moscow, I was appointed military commissar of the Moscow defense headquarters, then became deputy chairman of the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars. These days like

once again our friendly relations with Mikhail Nikolayevich were renewed. Kulyabko emphasizes that Tukhachevsky entered the military department of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee even before their meeting, and not after. Maybe the young lieutenant had some other patron among the old members of the party. Lydia Nord claims that he was none other than the leader of the Samara Bolsheviks Valeryan Vladimirovich Kuibyshev: "Fate pushed Tukhachevsky with Nikolai Vladimirovich Kuibyshev (Valeryan's brother, captain of the tsarist army, who later became a commander in the Red Army and was shot in 1938, as part of the purge, started by the Tukhachevsky affair. - B.S.) in 1918 at the station in Moscow. And this chance meeting determined the further fate of the marshal. N.V. Kuibyshev dragged him to his place and introduced him to his brother. The elder Kuibyshev, guessing and appreciating Tukhachevsky's extraordinary nature, tried to persuade him for three days to join the Bolsheviks. He brought him together with senior officers who had already gone over to the Reds, and when Tukhachevsky was recruited, V.V. Kuibyshev used all his influence in the party to nominate a young second lieutenant to a responsible military post. He himself vouched for Tukhachevsky and found other guarantors for him. It may very well be that it was the Kuibyshev recommendation that opened the doors for Tukhachevsky to the Military Department of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, which was engaged in the formation of the Red Army that was just being

created. Soon, on April 5, 1918, Tukhachevsky became a member of the RCP (b). Here, Kulyabko, and possibly Kuibyshev, also helped. Kulyabko recalled: "I saw that he already stood firmly on the positions of the Bolsheviks, heard his enthusiastic comments about Vladimir Ilyich and therefore invited him to join the ranks of the Communist Party. Mikhail Nikolaevich Tukhachevsky was deeply moved by this proposal. He thought it over very seriously and agreed.

Together we went to the Khamovnichesky District Committee of the Party, which was then located, it seems, on the Arbat. I gave M.N. Tukhachevsky verbal recommendation and confirmed it in writing. He did this without the slightest hesitation, firmly believing that by becoming a communist, Mikhail Nikolayevich would bring even greater benefit to the Soviet government, which was in great need of devoted military specialists.

The German offensive, which resumed in February, and the Civil War that had already begun on the outskirts, demanded an early

revival of the regular army. Just then, an opportunity turned up, about which Kulyabko writes: "In the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars, personnel were then selected for the so-called Western Veil (grouping of troops designed to protect the Center of Russia from a possible German invasion. - B.S.) . At my suggestion, M.N. Tukhachevsky was appointed military commissar of the Moscow region of the Western Veil. And when the rebellion of the White Czechs broke out on the Volga, I had the opportunity to report on Tukhachevsky V.I. Lenin. Vladimir Ilyich became very interested in him and asked to bring a "communist lieutenant."

Nikolai Nikolayevich himself was not present during Tukhachevsky's conversation with Lenin, but according to a friend, he conveyed the contents of the conversation with the leader: "Vladimir Ilyich immediately asked him two questions: under what circumstances did he escape from German captivity and how does he look at the construction of a new socialist army ? Tukhachevsky replied that he could not remain a prisoner when revolutionary events unfolded in Russia, and then began to set forth in detail his thoughts on how to unite the scattered Red Guard detachments into a real regular army.

Mikhail Nikolayevich made a favorable impression on Lenin. He was thrown into the fight against the rebellious Czechoslovak corps, whose uprising in the Volga region, the Urals and Siberia began on May 25, 1918. On June 19, Tukhachevsky went to Kazan with the following mandate: "The bearer of this military commissar of the Moscow region, Mikhail Nikolaevich Tukhachevsky, was sent to the disposal of the commander-in-chief of the Eastern Front Muravyov to use work of exceptional importance in organizing and forming the Red Army into higher military formations and commanding them." On June 27, Tukhachevsky arrived at the Inza station to take up the post of commander of the 1st Revolutionary Army. This army had yet to be formed from disparate detachments. Already in early July, the young commander managed

to form the first regular divisions - Penza, Inza and Simbirsk, which subsequently received numbers, respectively, 20th, 15th and 24th. All of them, and especially the 24th Iron, led by the State Duma. Guy, became famous on the fronts of the Civil War as the most persistent and combat-ready formations. To equip troops with command staff

Tukhachevsky and the head of the Simbirsk communists I.M. Vareikis for the first time issued an order to mobilize officers. It was published on July 4, 1918. Later, Tukhachevsky defended his priority not only in attracting military specialists, but also in organizing repressions, without which it is impossible to build an army in wartime: "... For the first time, army and divisional military revolutionary tribunals were introduced in the 1st Army. The establishment of the tribunals finally secured the establishment of discipline. Very soon, Tukhachevsky's troops achieved their first successes.

On July 8, 1918, he telegraphed Kulyabko to Moscow, wanting to share the joy of victory with a friend: "The carefully prepared operation of the First Army ended brilliantly. The Czechoslovaks are defeated. Syzran was taken from the battle. However, the offensive did not develop due to the subsequent dramatic events, during which Tukhachevsky almost died. Against Moscow, the commander-in-chief of the Eastern Front, the Left Social Revolutionary and former Lieutenant Colonel M.A. Ants. This was a response to the suppression of the speech of his party comrades in Moscow on 6 July. This is how Tukhachevsky described Muravyov in his memoir article "The First Army in 1918": "Muravyov was distinguished by his frenzied ambition, remarkable personal courage and the ability to electrify the masses of soldiers ... The thought of "becoming Napoleon" haunted him, and this definitely showed through in all his manners, conversations and deeds. He did not know how to assess the situation. His tasks were completely lifeless. He couldn't manage. He interfered in trifles, even commanded companies. Before the Red Army, he fawned. In order to win their love for himself, he allowed them to rob with impunity, used the most shameless demagoguery, and so on. He was extremely cruel. In general, Muravyov's abilities were many times inferior to the scale of his claims. He was a selfish adventurer, and nothing more.

Did not come out of Muravyov Napoleon. Tukhachevsky is right: Mikhail Artemyevich turned out to be a useless leader of the rebellion (a successful rebellion, as you know, is called a revolution), he failed to correctly assess the situation and even competently conduct propaganda among his soldiers. On July 11, having arrived in Simbirsk for a meeting with Tukhachevsky, Muravyov suggested that the commander of the First stop the fight against the Czechs and the Kom-uch People's Army, support the declaration of war on Germany, and if

The Council of People's Commissars does not approve of these actions, then, having united with the Czechoslovak corps, go on a campaign against Moscow to overthrow the power of Lenin and then create a new front against the Germans. Tukhachevsky refused and was immediately arrested by the Red Army soldiers who came **with** Muravyov. The commander-in-chief told the commander: "I raise the banner of insurrection, make peace with the Czechoslovaks and declare war on Germany." Then Muraviev went to occupy the Simbirsk Soviet. The troops that supported the commander-in-chief did not know that he had betrayed the Soviet government, and thought that Muravyov was acting in agreement with Moscow. When the deception was revealed, the song of the brave lieutenant colonel was sung. After the departure of Muravyov, the soldiers gathered without delay and unnecessary ceremonies to "discharge" Tukhachevsky. He talks about his salvation as follows: "... The Red Army soldiers wanted to shoot me immediately, but they were extremely surprised when, to the question of some, why I was arrested, I answered them: "For being a Bolshevik." They were greatly taken aback **and** answered: "Why, we are also Bolsheviks." The conversation began. Having heard about the Left SR uprising in Moscow and having received an explanation of Muravyov's betrayal, the remaining Red Army soldiers immediately elected a delegation and sent it to the armored division to discuss the issue. Tukhachevsky was released. In the meantime, Vareikis concentrated a Latvian detachment loyal to the Bolsheviks in the building of the provincial executive committee and invited Muravyov to negotiations. The commander-in-chief appeared with an armed retinue, but did not notice the ambush. When the negotiations reached an impasse, Muravyov with threatening words "Then I will talk to you differently!" rushed to the door to the corridor, where his guards remained. And I saw that the retinue was already disarmed and Latvians were standing around with attached bayonets. With a cry of "Betrayal!" Mikhail Artemyevich managed to draw his Mauser and fire three times, wounding two before he was killed. After the death of Muravyov, until the arrival of the new commander-in-chief of the front, I.I. Vatsetis Tukhachevsky temporarily commanded the Eastern Front. The Soviet troops, struck by the betrayal of Muravyov, who was popular among the Red Army, were demoralized for a while. In a panic, almost without resistance, they left Bugulma, Melekes, Simbirsk, and in early August, Kazan, where the bulk of the Russian gold reserves evacuated here fell into the hands of the Czechs and the P

fighters began to suspect almost all former officers of betrayal.

Tukhachevsky did not escape suspicion, although, it would seem, his behavior during, as Mikhail Nikolayevich himself said, "Muravyov's buffoon uprising", did not give any reason to doubt his loyalty to the Soviet government. Member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Front P.A. Kobozev even ordered the arrest of Tukhachevsky, but this was opposed by Vareikis and a member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the 1st Army V.V. Kuibyshev. The conflict was settled without the intervention

Tukhachevsky's energy and diligence, his willingness to take harsh measures to establish a revolutionary order in his units, were praised by Trotsky himself. He set as an example to other army commanders "the glorious name of Comrade Tukhachevsky." Soon the Soviet troops launched a

counteroffensive. The Simbirsk operation was the first major operation developed and successfully carried out by Tukhachevsky. In the essay "The First Army in 1918" he described in detail its course. First, white groups were to be defeated to the south (near Kuzovatovo station) and north of Simbirsk, near the village of Bolshoe Batyrev, and then it was planned to capture the city and the railway bridge across the Volga with a quick attack in order to immediately cross to the left bank. The Inza division and the Vitebsk regiment of the Simbirsk division advanced on Kuzovatovo, and the Alatyr group of the Simbirsk division advanced on Bolshoye Batyrev.

Tukhachevsky described his first major success with enthusiasm characteristic of youth: "August 25, the rapid fulfillment of the task begins. The enemy is downed and stunned. On August 27, the Inza division reaches the line east of the villages of Russian Temryazan - Polivanov - Akshout. The Vitebsk regiment, attacking the enemy from the rear, came out on the same date to the south-west of the village of Baevka. The defeated enemy, rapidly slipping out of the bag, fled to the south-east of the Kuzovatovo station ... Initially, I

planned to strike at Simbirsk with two divisions: Inzen and Simbirsk, but difficulties in organizing communications and rear forces forced all the forces intended to attack Simbirsk to be transferred to the commander of Simbirsk Guy.

The plan of operation was based on the idea of a concentric offensive. Inza division was tasked with active

defense of the occupied lines. The Inza division at the front was also assigned a defensive task. But the cavalry of the left flank was tasked with occupying the village of Terenga and interrupting the telegraph communication between Syzran and Simbirsk...

The forces of the shock Simbirsk group comrade. Guy reached about 8 thousand bayonets. The enemy occupied the forward lines with small forces and had rather significant forces in the Simbirsk area (which was clarified after the capture of the latter). With these reserves, as it turned out later, the Whites were only slightly inferior in numbers, but when drawing up the plan, our forces seemed to be significantly superior to those of the enemy.

By order number 7 for the army, the start of the offensive was scheduled for the morning of September 9, and the capture of Simbirsk was calculated on the third day of the offensive ... These calculations were based on: firstly, the superiority of our forces, and secondly, the advantageous detour with the planned concentric movement and, thirdly, the speed of movement and surprise. On the line of the enemy's disposition, our units had already reached full cooperation, widely bypassed the enemy's disposition, and thereby predetermined his quick defeat.

All these calculations were fully justified in practice. By the evening of the first day, the White Guard troops were in a panic. In the center they offered fierce resistance, but the endless detour of their flanks completely upset the latter, and the retreat took on a disorderly character. On the outskirts of Simbirsk, they tried to fortify themselves and offer the last resistance, but with the unanimous onslaught of our inspired troops, they were quickly defeated and overturned over the Sviyaga, and then over the Volga. Thus, a

thoroughly prepared operation with one blow solved an extremely important task. The strong Simbirsk group of the enemy was defeated, the Volga was cut by them, and, therefore, the best retreat for the White Guards from near Kazan, which fell almost simultaneously with Simbirsk ... We captured colossal war trophies. The railway bridge across the Volga was captured in perfect working order. During the operation to capture Simbirsk, Tukhachevsky showed features

of his own military style. Here is Suvorov's "speed and onslaught" (later, in Moscow, Mikhail Nikolayevich, having collected

the richest library, dedicated a special section to rare books about the life and wars of Suvorov). Here and the desire to achieve success with minimal losses for their troops. Here, too, it is customary at the decisive point of the front to bring into action almost all available forces, leaving practically no reserves and relegating concern for the flanks to the background. This tactic was based on a firm belief in the superiority of one's own troops over the enemy's troops, both in moral terms and in terms of combat training. When things actually went like this, Tukhachevsky was lucky. Successes on the Eastern Front were made easier for the Reds

by the fact that almost all Czechoslovak troops had already been withdrawn from the battle. The command of the corps professed an almost Leninist principle: any Russian counter-revolution is worth something only if it knows how to defend itself. The Slav brothers were not going to drag chestnuts out of the fire for the deputies of the assembly dispersed by the Bolsheviks, the All-Russian Constituent Assembly, who had gathered in Samara and formed the Directory. The People's Army of to form later than the Red Army, and was only just learning to really fight. Tukhachevsky's troops were destined to liberate from the Whites not only Lenin's hometown of Simbirsk,

which was soon destined to become Ulyanovsk, but also the capital of the Directory, Samara, taken on October 8 by a concentric strike. Soon the People's Army also left Ufa. The anti-Soviet forces in the East were in a state of deepest crisis. But Tukhachevsky at that time did not happen to become the liberator of the Urals and Siberia. He was transferred to the Southern Front against the Cossack army of Ataman P.N. Krasnov. It had already been defeated near Tsaritsyn, and the command of the Red Army hoped first of all to finish off the Don Army, and then to defeat the Volunteer Army of General Denikin. On December 15, 1918, Lenin demanded from the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic: "... Nothing to the west, a little to the east, **everything** (almost) to the south." But after the defeat of the Don and Volunteers, which seemed close and real, the possibility of a rapid advance into the areas left by the Germans who capitulated in Compiègne, and the hope of bringing a world revolution to Western Europe on the Red Army bayonets, opened up.

Mikhail Nikolaevich arrived at the Southern Front in early January 1919. He did not remain an assistant to the front commander for long, preferring to lead one of the armies - the 8th, where the 15th Inzen division was now fighting, formerly one of the best in the 1st army. By that time, Krasnov's troops, decomposed under the influence of Tsaritsyn's failure and Soviet agitation, were retreating disorderly, many Cossack regiments, believing the promises that the Soviets would not touch them, dispersed to their homes. However, the troops of the Red Army and the Cheka detachments occupying the territory of the Don region began to carry out the inhuman directive on "decossackization", sanctioned by Lenin and Sverdlov on January 24, 1919. It provided not only legal, but almost total physical liquidation of the Cossack class. Member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the 8th Army I.E. Yakir, who became one of Tukhachevsky's closest friends and shared his bitter fate, following the directive of the Central Committee, issued an order providing for "execution on the spot of all those with weapons" (and almost everyone among the Cossacks was armed), and "percentage destruction of the male population." The new commander of the 8th Army took some steps to limit the scale of repressions and requisitions (bread was taken cleanly from the Cossacks), rightly fearing a mass uprising of people who had learned to fight since childhood. So, Tukhachevsky softened the order of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Southern Front of February 15, 1919 on the confiscation of horses and carts from the Cossacks, demanding that the entire burden of this disastrous measure for the Cossack households be laid "only on the kulak and wealthy part of the population." But his power as commander of the army for a significant change in policy in the Don region was clearly not enough.

Tukhachevsky's army advanced along the Don. Parts of Krasnov offered only weak resistance. Cossacks surrendered by the thousands. However, from the end of January 1919, the troops of the Volunteer Army entered the Donets Basin and the advance of the Southern Front slowed down. From mid-February, after the resignation of Krasnov and the arrival of Denikin's henchman, General A.P. Bogaevesky, the influx of units of the Volunteer Army to the Don increases sharply. Commander of the Southern Front V.M. Gittis sent the 8th Army to the southeast, deep into the Don region. Tukhachevsky, on his own initiative, turned his troops to Millerovo in order to advance on Rostov along

the shortest route - through the Donbass - and defeat the volunteer divisions. He took into account that the proletarian population of the coal basin is much more sympathetic to the Red Army than the Cossacks, embittered by decossacks. Tukhachevsky, it would seem, is going to a direct violation of military discipline. However, this case is not as simple as it might seem. The fact is that the commander of the front, Gittis, by his orders, violated the directive of the commander-in-chief Vatsetis, which provided for the maneuver of part of the front forces from Tsaritsyn in the direction of the Donbass. Gittis proceeded from the situation that had developed after the defeat of the Cossacks near Tsaritsyn in the grouping of Soviet troops and the difficulty of transferring new forces to the Millerovo Rostov direction, since the enemy had thoroughly destroyed the railway tracks during the retreat. But his decision turned out to be wrong. The 8th Army, interacting with the group of I.S. Kozhevnikova, achieved some success. However, the forces for a decisive victory were not enough. The front commander, at the urgent request of the proposals of

the army commander of the 8th, tried to do what he did not do in January: regroup the troops in march order to strike at the Donbass. But the exhaustion of the horse stock and the typhus epidemic significantly slowed down the maneuver. Time was irrevocably lost. In March, Tukhachevsky's army commander-in-chief agreed was was able to push back volunteer units to the right bank of the Seversky Donets in the Kalitvenskaya - Glubokaya - Krasnovka - Luganskaya area. But in the meantime, the ice began to drift, the river opened up, and a further offensive through the widely overflowing Donets became impossible for a long time. In addition, in early March, a Cossack uprising broke out on the Upper Don, diverting more and more Red forces.

Tukhachevsky, like Vatsetis, considered Gittis the main culprit for the failure to finish off the Don Army and completely occupy the Don Army Region and the Donbass. On March 23, 1919 (it was this day that the Commander-in-Chief previously called as the deadline for defeating the enemy), Mikhail Nikolayevich, at his request, motivated by the inability to work well with Gittys, received a new appointment. Tukhachevsky was returned to the Eastern Front, where the situation was again critical.

On November 18, 1918, the government of the Directory, which settled in Omsk, was overthrown by detachments of officers and Cossacks, who brought to power the former commander of the Black Sea Fleet, Admiral A.V. Kolchak. The admiral proclaimed himself the "Supreme Ruler of Russia" and in fact established a military dictatorship in Siberia and the Urals. Kolchak managed for some time to unite the disparate troops of several regional governments in the East of Russia, to form a more or less combat-ready army, supplied with everything necessary by England and France from the stocks left after the First World War. The admiral threw her on the offensive on the Soviet Eastern Front, hoping to reach the Volga, and then undertake a decisive campaign against Moscow. On March 4, the Siberian Army under the command of the Czech General R. Gaida, who decided to try his luck with the Russian White movement, went on the offensive to the Kama River, driving back parts of the 2nd and 3rd Red armies. And on March 6, the Western Army of General M.V. went on the attack. Khanzhina, which overturned the 5th Soviet Army, which was twice inferior in number to it. The Whites occupied Ufa, Bugulma, Buguruslan, Belebey ... They had no more than 100 kilometers to the Volga. The 5th Army was defeated and rolled back without serious resistance by 20–25 kilometers a day. The center of the Eastern Front was broken through. The Soviet command urgently needed to strengthen the 5th Army in order to achieve a turning point. Divisions were sent here both from neighboring armies and from other fronts, as well as new formations from the interior provinces. The 5th Army was to become the strongest on the Eastern Front. At the

beginning of April, Tukhachevsky was placed at its head. Commander of the Eastern Front S.S. Kamenev developed a plan for a counterattack on the flank of Khanzhin's army by the troops of the Southern Group of M.V. Frunze, which consisted of three armies: 1st, 4th and Turkestan. Another army, the 5th, until May 11 was temporarily subordinate to Frunze. Then a

personal acquaintance of Tukhachevsky with Frunze began, which quickly grew into friendship. On April 28, the Southern Group launched a counteroffensive into the flank and rear of the Western Army. The 5th Army attacked the enemy frontally in the general direction of Buguruslan and Bugulma. During the subsequent offensive, the left-flank 6th Ural Corps of the W

Volga. Having repulsed the counterattack of the enemy, who brought into action the newly formed and poorly trained Volga Corps of Kappel, the 27th Infantry Division of the 5th Army occupied Bugulma on May 13. Khanzhin's troops, although they escaped encirclement, suffered heavy losses and lost morale. However, Kolchak's *nashtaver* YES. Lebedev and the commander of the Siberian army did not realize the gravity of the situation. The Siberians continued their already senseless offensive against Vyatka in the vain hope that the Reds would transfer part of the forces that were smashing the Western army against the troops of Gaida.

Meanwhile, there were changes in the command of the Soviet Eastern Front. Instead of S.S. Kamenev, on May 5, a former AA general was appointed. Samoy-do, who previously led the 6th Separate Army in the Arkhangelsk direction. This appointment was the result of the beginning of the confrontation between Trotsky and a member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Eastern Front S.I. Gusev, who supported Kamenev. This conflict escalated in the second half of May, when the defeat of the Western White Army was revealed. Kamenev and Gusev insisted on continuing the general offensive in order to finish off Kolchak without giving him a break - otherwise, Kolchak's troops would recover over the winter and by the spring of 1920 they would again be a formidable enemy. But commander-in-chief Vatsetis and Trotsky believed that the main forces should be transferred to the south against the increasingly successful Denikin, and in the east they should limit themselves to active defense at the turn of the Belaya River after the supposed capture of Ufa. These disputes, which took place not only within the framework of the military department, but also in the Central Committee of the party, ended only in July, when Kamenev took the place of Vatsetis, who was arrested on an unconfirmed charge of Bonapartist inclinations.

In 1935, in an article in *Krasnaya Zvezda*, Tukhachevsky outlined the course of events as follows: "Starting on April 25 (Tukhachevsky's troops attacked the Whites three days earlier than the main forces of the Southern Group, in order to attract the reserves of the Western Army and facilitate its flank bypass. - **B. S.**), the offensive of the Southern Group developed very successfully. By May 1, the right flank of the 5th Army reached the area of the Zaglyadino station ... At this time, Tron-kiy found it necessary to intervene in the affairs of the Eastern Front. Commander comrade. S.S. Kamenev was relieved of his post, and Comrade was appointed in his place. A.A. Samoilov. This circumstance

spoiled the brilliant start of our counteroffensive and allowed the Whites to order their retreat. The 5th Army was withdrawn from the subordination of Comrade. Frunze and passed into the direct subordination of Comrade. Samoilov. May 11 Comrade. Samoilov aims the 5th Army north, to the mouth of the Vyatka River, on May 14 turns it to Belebey, on May 17 again sends it to the north, and on May 19 to the northeast. Instead of persecution - marking time.

Protests began against such a command. On May 21, Commander-5 sent a telegram to the Commander, which said: "Starting from May 10, probably due to many circumstances unknown to me, you were given five tasks for the 5th Army, each time canceling one another ... These cancellations of orders completely exhausted the divisions, and the parts are completely mixed up, the connection is broken, and so on. In conclusion, the army

commander asked the commander to comply with article 19 of the Field Manual, the 1918 edition, which says that before giving an order, one must think.

"Big troubles suffered and comrade. Frunze, to whom comrade. Samoilov unexpectedly on May 18 forbade the persecution of whites. Tov. Frunze gave a decisive rebuff, and comrade. Samoilov canceled his order, allowing Ufa to be occupied. Tov. Frunze successfully carried out an operation to occupy

the city of Ufa. From the point of view of military subordination, Tukhachevsky's behavior was unacceptable, despite the fact that he was essentially right. However, during the years of the Civil War, such squabbles between lower-ranking superiors and non-execution of orders were quite common among both Reds and Whites. For example, almost simultaneously with the quarrel between Tukhachevsky and Samoilov, at the end of May, on the other side of the front, the commander of the Siberian Army, General Gaidar, demanded from Kolchak the resignation of the leader Lebedev, and to a direct question whether he, Gaidar, intends to continue to carry out the orders of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, he answered: "Yes, but since they will not interfere with my, as the commander of the Siberian army, operational orders. The rebellious commander was threatened with arrest, but in the end they left him in his former position, with only a promise to carry out all orders, and not just those that please him. Very many orders both in the Red Army and in

white armies were executed in this way: "in so far as". Tukhachevsky also sinned with this, but no less often he himself suffered from such practices on the part of subordinates or neighbors. In addition, communications did not work well, and orders and reports on the situation often did not reach the appropriate headquarters.

It should be noted that Tukhachevsky's strategic decisions were not always thought out and balanced. Trotsky, for example, highly appreciating Mikhail Nikolayevich as a "talented commander, but prone to excessive swiftness," admitted in 1937: "He lacked the ability to assess the military situation from all sides. There was always a clear element of adventurism in his strategy.

The Zlatoust operation, which opened the way for the Red Army through the Ural Range, was carried out almost exemplarily from the point of view of the canons of military art (despite the fact that simply "exemplary", without "almost", does not exist in nature - chance or unaccounted circumstances always interfere in the plans of commanders). The area where the 5th Army was to operate was difficult to access for large masses of troops - wooded mountain ranges intersected by the valleys of the Ai and Yuryuzan rivers, a narrow defile of the railway and the Birsk-Zlatoust tract (Khanzhin had previously walked this tract in his insane offensive to the Volga) . Tukhachevsky struck the main blow on the extreme left flank, from which the mentioned tract departed. Here he concentrated a shock group of 15 rifle regiments of the 26th and 27th divisions with strong artillery. And to the right of it, a 90-kilometer gap, unoccupied by troops, boldly left it against the almost inaccessible Kara-Tau ridge. The Whites, in turn, covered both the Birsk tract and the Zlatoust railway with two groups of approximately the same number. On the highway stood a badly battered Ural Corps with one and a half infantry and three weak cavalry divisions. The railway was held by two infantry divisions of the same corps and a cavalry brigade. In the rear, five crossings from the front line, there were two infantry divisions of the Ufa Corps of Kappel and the Izhevsk brigade - the most combat-ready in the entire Kolchak army, formed from the workers of the Izhevsk factories who rebelled against the Bolsheviks. The infantry division of the Whites was then already significantly inferior in terms of the number of personnel to the infantry division of the Reds.

On the night of June 23-24, the 26th Division crossed the Ufa River near the village of Aidos and captured the exit from the defile of the Yuryuzan River. A day later, the main forces of the 27th division also overcame Ufa, advancing along the Birsk tract, and one of its brigades, moving along the railway, occupied the Asha-Balashovsky plant on June 29. The 26th division moved along the Yuryuzan valley. At times we had to walk along the river bed. The fighters were sometimes forced to drag guns across mountain passes on their own. Near the village of Duvan, the 27th division defeated parts of the Ural Corps and on July 1 reached the Ufa plateau, along which the path to Zlatoust, an important road junction, opened. With its capture, Kolchak's troops would no longer be able to hold the Urals for a long time. From Zlatoust the way to Western Siberia opened. However, the 26th division, which did not meet resistance, reached the plateau two days earlier than the 27th and suddenly attacked the enemy's 12th division, which was located on vacation. Parts of the latter concentrated in the area of the village of Nasibash, where they were able to surround Ziyul with three regiments of the 26th division. The latter, however, managed to break through and link up with their reserve regiment. The 4th White Division later engaged the 27th Division, which had just crossed the mountain passes, and was defeated. On July 6, the 26th division captured Nasibash. However, the main forces of the Kappel Corps and the Ural Corps managed to avoid encirclement due to the fact that the fighting delayed the advance of the bypass columns of the 5th Army. On July 10, Tukhachevsky launched an attack on Zlatoust with the forces of the 27th division along the shortest path, while the 26th was supposed to press the whites to the

After the loss of Zlatoust, Khanzhin's Western Army retreated to Chelyabinsk. The fall of this city threatened to interrupt the connection of the main forces of Kolchak with the troops operating in the south, in the regions of Orenburg and Uralsk, under the leadership of General G.A. Belova. Therefore, the Whites tried to defend Chelyabinsk. They wanted to lure the 5th Army into a trap, first surrendering the city, and then surrounding Tukhachevsky's divisions in it. But this plan required complex maneuvers and good training of fighters and commanders. Kolchak's troops, which consisted mostly of mobilized peasants and captured Red Army soldiers, were no longer suitable for large-scale regroupings and deep coverage. Minister of War Budberg was extremely skeptical about the chances of success of the plan. On July 25, he commented on the plan of the Chelyabinsk

operations: "... I learned that an extremely complex operation was planned to encircle the Chelyabinsk group of Reds, requiring tested and reliable troops of the best old cadre type; the operation is complicated and artificial even for old troops, since it requires perfect execution, and the slightest penalty anywhere breaks everything and can lead to complete collapse. Such operations can only be carried out on the map or on large ostentatious maneuvers. The condition of the troops, their inability to maneuver, their inability to withstand breakthroughs and detours make it necessary to consider that for this operation 95% is for the fact that it will end in a

complete disaster. According to the rough scheme shown to me at Headquarters, some divisions will have to fight on two or three fronts, that is, such a task has been given that our modern troops are not able to fulfill, because they cannot withstand flank fire and even signs of the enemy being in the rear and on the flanks. Undoubtedly, this is Lebedev's insane bet to save his faltering career and to prove his military genius ... "

And the next day, the pessimistic baron found out "some details of the chaotic operation born by the wise heads of Lebedev and Sakharov; it turned out that they were planning to repeat the Mamaev battle, with the luring of the Reds into a trap with the help of voluntary cleansing of the Chelyabinsk knot; believe that the Reds will rush to this bait, after which they will be slammed there with the help of a very complex maneuver, in which the main role is assigned to the divisions of the Omsk District, completely raw in combat terms, and cavalry

parts.

From a paper, theoretical point of view, all this is very beautiful and tempting, so it is not surprising that the admiral, who understands nothing about land matters, agreed to this operation; but from the point of view of the actual execution and evaluation of the means of execution, the operation is completely insane and possible only on the condition that the reds represent a herd of sheep and save at the first sight

our brilliant plan; and since there is no hope for this, and so how we brandish means that are completely unsuitable for execution, then at least my whole chance of success lies in the string bag and the intercession of Nicholas the Wonderworker.

When the whites left Chelyabinsk, an uprising of workers broke out there, as a result of which the Kolchak rearguards were badly battered. After the 5th Army entered the city on July 24, groups of generals Voitsekhovsky and Kappel went on the offensive on its flanks, numbering, respectively, 16 and 10 thousand bayonets and cavalry. However, the former Red Army men, who dominated Kappel, soon simply refused to go on the offensive, and the general preferred to leave them on the defensive, fearing treason. Tukhachevsky, on the other hand, significantly replenished his army at the expense of Chelyabinsk workers. On July 29, his troops went on the offensive and pushed the whites further east.

On August 7, 1919, the commander of the 5th Army was awarded the Order of the Red Banner, as noted in the order of the Revolutionary Military Council, "for the following distinctions: the valiant troops of the 5th Army, under the skillful leadership of Comrade Tukhachevsky, after stubborn battles, having defeated the enemy's manpower, crossed the Urals . Buguruslan, Bugulma, Birsik and Zlatoust fell under our blows thanks to the bold, full of risk, broad maneuvers of the army, conceived by Comrade Tukhachevsky. On July 24, Chelyabinsk was taken by the heroic units of the 3rd brigade of the 27th rifle division. The huge success achieved by the army is the result, mainly, of the talentedly created comrade. Tukhachevsky of the plan of the operation, which he firmly put into practice. Then the riskiness of maneuvers was unconditionally put to the credit of the commander. No one thought that in a year on the Polish front such a maneuver would lead the Soviet

armies to complete disaster. The troops of the "supreme ruler" of Russia were able to stop only at the turn of the Tobol River. Here the 5th Army was entrusted with the main task: to cross the river, capture Petropavlovsk and, having defeated the 3rd White Army under the command of General K.V. Sakharov, which opposed it, go to the Kolchak capital Omsk. On August 20, Tukhachevsky's fighters crossed the Tobol and reached the distant approaches to Petropavlovsk, having covered up to 180 kilometers in a short time. It was necessary to act in the Cossack regions, where the majority of the population was hostile to the Bolsheviks. Therefore, Tukhachevsky had to create the Trinity and Kokchetav fortified areas to protect the flanks of the army from the Cossack partisan detachments. The commander led the offensive in two directions - along the Zverinogolovskaya - Petropavlovsk highway, where

the main blow was delivered, and along the Kurgan-Petropavlovsk railway, hoping to engulf the enemy and force him to a quick retreat. Commander of the Eastern Front V.A. Alderode, a former general, insisted on a different solution - the concentration of all the forces of the army in the direction of the railway, where the main white grouping was concentrated. In addition, he took into account that the route passed through the Cossack regions, where one could expect especially strong resistance. Tukhachevsky, as usual, acted in his own way, continuing to operate with the main forces of the army in the direction of Zverinogolovskaya - Petropavlovsk. Later, in 1935, in the article "On the Eastern Front" published in Krasnaya Zvezda, he did not spare black colors for the former comfront, who was arrested back in the early 30s as part of the purge of the Red Army from former tsarist officers and therefore has not now been awarded an certifying the reliability of the address "comrade": "It is difficult to understand where Trotsky looked for such people! A man unknown to anyone, mediocre at best, Alderode did everything in his power to prevent our relentless pursuit of Kolchak. Yes, Mikhail Nikolayevich knew how to subtly hint that his opponent was perhaps a saboteur and a hidden enemy of Soviet power!

Alderode insisted on a return to his plan and a corresponding regrouping of troops. As Tukhachevsky recalled, "there was a strong telegraph skirmish, but Alderode categorically insisted on regrouping. White took this mistake into account. Already on the outskirts of Petropavlovsk, they launched a counteroffensive, pinned down units of the 5th Army from the front, and moved two infantry divisions from the south to the right flank and rear" - the newly formed Siberian Cossack Cavalry Corps of the Siberian Ataman General P.P. Ivanov Rinov (in the mid-20s, in exile in China, he went over to the side of the Bolsheviks) and the cavalry group of General Domozhirov. The corps of Siberian Cossacks defeated one of the brigades of the 26th Infantry Division, overturned Tukhachevsky's troops and drove them back to Tobol. "Unknown to anyone, at best incompetent" Alderode saved the legendary "Fifth Army" from defeat, reinforcing Tukhachevsky's army with a division from the front reserve and throwing the formations of the 3rd Army against the left flank of the White strike group, which also forced the Tobol. Thanks to this, the 5th Army retreated across the river without

heavy losses and kept the bridgehead on the right bank. On October 14, replenished by the mobilization of the workers of Chelyabinsk and other Ural cities and the newly formed cavalry division, the 5th Army went on the offensive and captured Petropavlovsk on October 29. The enemy retreated in disorder to Omsk. Here again a conflict arose between Alderoge and Tukhachevsky. Commander-5 wanted to send a cavalry division to intercept the Whites' retreat from Omsk, but the front commander insisted that it be sent to secure the right flank of the army from Kokchetav. It is difficult to say which of them was actually right. On the one hand, the flank threat turned out to be significantly exaggerated: the Cossacks retreated from Kokchetav to Akmolinsk. On the other hand, as Tukhachevsky himself admitted, during the operation, the actions of the cavalry division "did not have the character of sufficient decisiveness", as a result of which it "did not achieve all the results that ... could achieve." So it is unlikely that this division would have been able to prevent the withdrawal of the main Kolchak forces from Omsk. Rather, she would have been defeated. In any case, the absence of a cavalry division in the rear of the Omsk group did not have a significant impact on the outcome of the operation. On November 14, 1919, the capital of the "supreme ruler" of Russia fell under the blows of the 3rd and 5th Soviet armies. On the way from Petropavlovsk to Omsk, 45,000 prisoners were taken; in Omsk itself, another 16,000 Kolchak soldiers and officers, wounded and sick with typhus, were captured. For the victory over Kolchak, the 5th Army was awarded the Order of the Red Banner and the Honorary Red Banner of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. And on December 17, 1919, its commander was awarded the highest award at that time -

the Honorary Revolutionary Weapon, which was a gilded saber with the Order of the Red Banner mounted in a scabbard. Such a distinction was granted to Tukhachevsky "for personal courage, broad initiative, energy, diligence and knowledge of the matter, shown by him during the victorious march of the valiant Red Army to the east, culminating in the capture of the city of Omsk."

On December 18, 1919, Tukhachevsky was received by Lenin, who asked him to draw up a report on the experience of using military specialists in the 5th Army. The commander did not keep himself waiting and the very next day he sent the text of the report to the deputy chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council E.M.

Sklyansky. Tukhachevsky especially emphasized the role of those former tsarist officers who had already managed to become members of the party. He rather lowly assessed the pre-revolutionary officer corps as a whole: "It is customary for us that the generals and officers of the old army are, in the full sense of the word, not only specialists, but also experts in military affairs ... In fact, the Russian officer corps of the old army never had any no other quality. For the most part, it consisted of people who received a limited military education, completely downtrodden and devoid of any initiative. Pointing to the reform of the military school after the Russo-Japanese War, Tukhachevsky made a reservation that its results began to be felt only by 1908-1910. Therefore, "a well-trained command staff, thoroughly familiar with modern military science and imbued with the spirit of bold warfare, exists only among the young officers ... A significant part of it, as the most active, perished in the imperialist war. Most of the surviving officers, the most active part, deserted after demobilization and the collapse of the tsarist army to Kaledin, the only center of counter-revolution at that time. This explains the abundance of good bosses in Denikin. Among the old officers capable

bosses are the exception."

Tukhachevsky convinced Sklyansky, Trotsky and Lenin of the need to establish unity of command by promoting military commissars and communist commanders from among junior officers and non-commissioned officers to command posts: "Among the military commissars and junior command staff there are many worthy to be commanders in responsible positions. It is only necessary to give wide scope for advancement and widely appoint military commissars to command positions, giving some of them a brief theoretical training. In any case, all military commissars from former officers or non-commissioned officers should be immediately turned to the command staff. All you need to do is to throw out the slogan about the transition to the communist command staff (in the main mass), and this command staff will appear, since it is already available in a hidden form ... This slogan has long been put forward in the 5th Army, and the command staff in it is all communist, and combat reality proves his superiority over generals and old officers.

The young army commander complained: "Very often in our country, appointments to responsible positions are made not from among the junior, distinguished chiefs, but from among the rear workers, old military experts. This order is very difficult for the front. Strategic and tactical methods are being carried out that do not correspond to the situation, the junior revolutionary leaders do not consider these leaders to be authorities, and, in general, things are not going well. And he insisted: "It is necessary to give wide scope for the advancement of the young, nascent revolutionary command staff, the most capable and necessary for the Red Army."

Tukhachevsky's report reflected the ever-increasing conflict of generations in the Red Army. The commander considered himself the most capable of the "nascent young revolutionary chiefs" and defended their priority when appointed to senior command positions. At the same time, he deliberately exaggerated the role of "active" junior officers in Denikin's army. After all, in fact, all the highest command positions in the Armed Forces of the South of Russia were occupied by generals or, at best, colonels, like the commanders of cavalry corps K.K. Mamontov and A.G. Shkuro. On the contrary, the victory of the Reds over the troops of Admiral Kolchak was largely facilitated by the fact that here the Whites did not have so many generals and senior officers in high command positions. For example, the chief of staff of the "supreme ruler" urgently promoted to general D.A. Lebedev before the February Revolution was just a captain. The same career generals as the commander of the troops of the Directory V. G. Boldyrev and the Minister of War, Baron A.P. Budberg, were either forced to emigrate under Kolchak or removed from an active role in commanding troops and planning operations. In the Red Army, many fronts and armies were led (as commanders, their assistants and chiefs of staff) by former tsarist generals, colonels and lieutenant colonels. The post of commander-in-chief was occupied by colonels I.I. Vatsetis and S.S. Kamenev, and their chiefs of staff were Generals P.P. Lebedev and M.D. Bonch-Bruевич. Then, after the end of the Civil War, generals and colonels, following the recommendations of Tukhachevsky, and not only him, were quietly removed to teaching, and in 1930, as part of the Chekist operation "Spring", most of those who remained in

the living were arrested on charges of an imaginary monarchist conspiracy, and some were even shot. True, most of those arrested were released during the year, but the lucky ones who survived to the 37th, who died in their beds, were literally counted in units. However, it was still too early to refuse the services of regular non-Communist officers. Trotsky and Lenin understood this very well and did not follow Tukhachevsky's advice. And they were in no hurry to refuse commissars in the army. The chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council reasonably remarked that many commanders might join the party for purely opportunistic reasons - to get rid of the commissar's guardianship - and the Bolsheviks would not be able to fully rely on such. The abolition of the commissariat for those military leaders who, like Tukhachevsky, joined the party at the very beginning of the revolution or even before 1917, would create discord in the structure of command and control and would put those commanders under whom the commissars were retained in an extremely ambiguous position.

On December 24, 1919, at the Academy of the Red General Staff, Tukhachevsky gave a program lecture "National and Class Strategy", where he tried to apply Marxist teaching to the field of military art and the conditions of warfare. He cited a conversation with the General Staff officer as an example: "I remember last spring one of our prominent military leaders, an old officer of the General Staff, said about the old officer corps: 'We are not capable of waging your war (typical opposition of a lieutenant-communist to senior officers the tsarist army on the principle of "we" - "you." - **B.S.**). We are prepared for waging a European war, for leading mass armies, but we are not adapted to the kind of war that you are waging, for example, in Ukraine.'" Tukhachevsky, "without denying the eternal foundations of strategy", defended some new laws characteristic of the civil war. He emphasized that, unlike a national war, a plan for such a war cannot be drawn up before it begins, and "the army of the insurgent, both revolutionary and counter-revolutionary, will be hastily put together, that is, it will be the product of improvisation." Tukhachevsky proclaimed: "A civil war, by its very nature, requires decisive, bold offensive actions. Revolutionary energy and courage dominate everything else." Unfortunately, Michael himself

Nikolayevich's "revolutionary courage" sometimes dominated common sense. How else can one explain the neglect of strategic reserves declared and justified by him: "Strategic reserves, the usefulness of which has always been doubtful, are completely inapplicable in our war ... The fronts of the armies are enormous. Communication routes are in complete disarray. At the same time, operations are developing at a rapid pace. All this makes the use of strategic reserves with the aim of delivering a blow to the enemy at a decisive moment, completely unnecessary and harmful self-weakening. In practice, the young army commander very often did not care about any reserves at all. And when, already as a commander of the front, he had to act in Poland, where, unlike Siberia, the network of communications was quite dense, the lack of reserves played, among other things, a fatal role.

Taking into account the experience of commanding the 8th Army in the Don region, Tukhachevsky, in fact, by the "opposite", from the "class point of view", substantiated the correctness of the plan chosen by Vatsetis and Trotsky for delivering the main blow through the proletarian Donbass: "The situation worsens significantly if in the rear, we still have centers that are "dead" for us. They require a large expenditure of troops to keep these centers in subjection. Such rears must be avoided. The main reason for the collapse of our campaign on the Southern Front in the spring of this year was that the main forces of the front were moved not where we would have Soviet vital rears in the Donets Basin, but where we had "dead" rears that required the allocation of large garrisons to hold on to the vast Don steppes. The question of the relation of number to space was not taken into account, and our armies were defeated. He argued the need to mass all forces on a small section of the front, because due to the poor state of transport, the enemy would not be able to quickly concentrate enough troops here to repel a blow with a "crushing hammer": "... We can achieve overwhelming superiority of forces in certain sectors of the front, and this, due to the impossibility for the enemy to equalize forces in time, will bring him an inevitable defeat ... The time required for the enemy to regroup is very long. The rate of development of operations in our war ... is remarkable for its extraordinary speed ... We will retain

superiority over the enemy and over the vast length of the pursuit. In addition to this

advantage, there is also the fact that the attacker mobilizes his kindred classes in the occupied areas. The defeated armies in the civil war are distinguished by the fact that the natives of the lost regions desert and remain in their native places. Thus, as one advances, the one who advances is continuously strengthened, and the one who retreats is constantly weakened. It is also one of the characteristic phenomena of the civil war. In national wars,

the retreating one, retreating to his communications, easily receives reinforcements, while the advancing one is constantly weakened to provide rears. In our war, an offensive against centers that are "dead" for us resembles these conditions of a national war. They can be smoothed out only by the systematic colonization of conquered areas with a great loss of time. Superiority of forces can

be achieved not only by transfers and regroupings, but also by a concentric offensive (so beloved by Tukhachevsky. - **B.S.**), if the enemy does not offer serious resistance to the point of concentration.

Organization behind enemy lines of uprisings and partisan actions we can also create a favorable balance of power."

Tukhachevsky's trouble was that he considered any future war with the participation of Soviet Russia as a continuation of the civil war and counted that the European proletariat would certainly come to the aid of the Red Army. And the war with Poland in 1920 was considered not only by the then commander of the Western Front, but also by most of the communist leaders as a civil war, and not a national one. Therefore, the enemy was called not just "Poles", but "White Poles", and the good old chauvinistic "Polish lords" acquired a purely class coloring - the "lords" meant the hated Polish nobles, the gentry, and at the same time the capitalists.

When it turned out that the Soviet-Polish war was, after all, a classic national war, that when retreating, Polish soldiers were by no means in a hurry to go home, and even more so to join the ranks of the Red Army victoriously advancing on Warsaw, that the advancing, as usual, in wars between states,

gradually weakens, breaking away from their bases, and the retreating one, approaching the sources of replenishment with people and weapons, strengthens, and then Tukhachevsky's troops were almost completely destroyed overnight. Unfortunately, the young commander did not fully learn that harsh lesson. And twelve years later, in his conceptual work *New Questions of War*, he optimistically predicted: "In the war of the imperialists against the USSR, the workers of the capitalist countries, fighting to turn the imperialist war into a civil war, will create their own Red Armies, just as the Polish workers did. in 1920 (? - **B.S.**), and will join the ranks of our Red Army in order to support and ensure its victory both over its own bourgeoisie and over the bourgeoisie of the whole world. It turned out even worse that the enemies of Tukhachevsky in the Red Army, who ultimately achieved the fall and death of the marshal, completely shared the attitude towards the exclusively offensive nature of the actions of the Soviet troops in a future war and even counted on the help of "brothers in the class" on the other side of the front. This largely contributed to the catastrophic start of the Great Patriotic War for the USSR. Tukhachevsky was again sent to the South to finish off Denikin. But he did not receive a new appointment immediately. At the

end of December, the winner of Kolchak was appointed to command the 13th Army of the Southern Front, aimed at the Crimea. Tukhachevsky arrived at the front headquarters in Kursk, but the commander A.I. Egorov did not put him in the army. On January 19, 1920, Mikhail Nikolaevich turned to the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic with a desperate letter: "I appeal to you with a convincing request: free me from unemployment. In the shtayugozape (January 10, 1920, the Southern Front was renamed the South-Western Front. - **B.S.**) I have been sitting aimlessly for almost three weeks, and just doing nothing for two months. I can't get a reason for the delay or a further appointment. If for almost two years of commanding various armies I have any merit, then I ask you to let me use my strength in live work, and if there is none at the front, then I ask you to give it in the matter of transport or military commissars.

Obviously, not without the participation of the chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, the commander-13, which never took place, was appointed on January 24 as interim commander of the Caucasian Front,

acting against the main forces of Denikin on the borders of the Don and Manych rivers. For a long time it was not possible to break through the fortified positions of the Whites here, which was one of the reasons for the dismissal of V.I. Shorin, who also had a sharp conflict with the influential leadership of the 1st Cavalry Army - S.M. Budyonny and K.E. Voroshilov.

At that time, there was no antagonism between Tukhachevsky, on the one hand, and Stalin, Voroshilov and Budyonny, on the other. Stalin fussed about appointing Tukhachevsky as commander of the front, and he was quite loyal to the Cavalry, taking the side of its command in disputes with the front headquarters and the commander of the neighboring 8th Army G.Ya. Sokolnikov. Discord began later, during a campaign in Poland. And it all ended with the fact that Stalin and Voroshilov in the 37th sanctioned the massacre of Tukhachevsky, and Budyonny was among those who pronounced

a predetermined death sentence on the marshal. Tukhachevsky's friendship with Ordzhonikidze began from the Caucasian front, which continued until the suicide of Grigory Konstantinovich in February 1937. The death of Ordzhonikidze and his conflict with Stalin in the last months of his life

hastened the fall of Tukhachevsky. Mikhail Nikolayevich quite successfully commanded the Caucasian Front. He turned the 1st Cavalry Army and the shock group of the 10th Army, advancing on the Tikhoretskaya station, to the north in time, which made it possible to suddenly attack the cavalry group of General A.A. Pavlov, Denikin's last hope, in the area of the villages of Sredneegorlykskaya and Yegorlykskaya, and from February 25 to March 2, 1920, defeat her in the largest oncoming cavalry battle of the Civil War. Now the whites almost non-stop rolled back to the Caucasus Mountains and Novorossiysk - the only port on the Black Sea coast of the Caucasus, from where they could evacuate to General Ya.A. Slashchova Crimea. Tukhachevsky, during the Kuban-Novorossiysk operation in March, did not allow Denikin to calmly carry out the evacuation from Novorossiysk. The main part of the Armed Forces of the South of Russia was captured during a vigorous pursuit. Only the heavily battered Volunteer Corps and a smaller part of the Don Army managed to leave for the Crimea, while most of the Don people who were not allowed into

Georgia by the Georgian government, surrendered to the Red Army at the end of April in the Sochi region. The Kuban army was also defeated, the remnants of which took refuge in the mountains.

Tukhachevsky, on orders from Moscow, was considering a campaign for the Greater Caucasus Range. On April 21, he signed a directive, according to which the 11th Army was to invade Azerbaijan on April 27 and move swiftly to Baku. But Mikhail Nikolayevich himself did not have a chance to directly supervise the operation to send troops into the Transcaucasus. At the end of April, he was given another order - to the West! A full-scale Soviet-Polish war began here.

During the period when General Denikin directly threatened Moscow, the Soviet government, like the Poles, showed a tendency to resolve the conflict peacefully, offering to give Poland a significant part of the territory of Ukraine and Belarus. However, the head of the Polish state, Marshal Jozef Pilsudski, not without reason, believed that this was only a temporary concession caused by the difficult situation of the Soviet government. He believed that only by defeating the Red Army could a more or less lasting peace be achieved with the Bolsheviks.

The situation changed with the defeat of the Volunteer Army. In December 1919, Poland left the peace proposals of the Soviet side unanswered. With the final defeat of Denikin, the Bolsheviks again seriously thought about the possibility of exporting the revolution to Europe on Red Army bayonets. As early as February 27, 1920, Lenin telegraphed the Revolutionary Military Council of the Western Front: "We must give the slogan to prepare for war with Poland." This was a response to the Polish demand put forward three weeks earlier to withdraw all Soviet troops from the territories lying within the borders of the Polish Commonwealth before 1772, that is, before the first partition of Poland. However, even before receiving the Polish preconditions for the conclusion of peace, Lenin foresaw that the Poles would present "absolutely impracticable, even. impudent demands," and ordered "all attention to be directed to the preparation, strengthening of the Western Front." War between Russia and Poland was becoming inevitable, and both sides were striving for it, regardless of the actions of a potential adversary. On March 5, Polish troops captured Mozyr and continued to prepare for a major offensive. April 21, 1920 in Warsaw

An agreement was signed with Petlyura, according to which his government was recognized as the only legal authority in Ukraine, and in return ceded Eastern Galicia to Poland to the border of the Zbruch River. Two days later, a military convention was concluded on the joint actions of the Polish and Ukrainian armies against the Bolsheviks. The Red Army was also preparing

for war. As early as March 14, Lenin telegraphed Tukhachevsky and Ordzhonikidze to the Caucasian front: "The Poles, apparently, will make war with us inevitable. Therefore, the main task now is not the Caucasian Labor Army (Caucasian Labor Army. - **B.S.**), but the preparation of the fastest transfer of maximum troops to the Western Front. Focus all your efforts on this task. Use the prisoners arch-energetically for the same. Three days later, in a direct conversation with Stalin, Vladimir Ilyich demanded that Denikin's troops in the Crimea be liquidated as soon as possible, since "news has just come from Germany that the Spartacists (members of the communist Spartak Union. - B. S.) are also fighting in Berlin . took over part of the city. It is not known who will win, but for us it is necessary to accelerate the mastery of the Crimea as much as possible in order to have completely free hands, because the civil war in Germany can force us to move west to help the communists "(this time the chairman of the Council of People's Commissars was mistaken: it was not the communists who fought on the streets of Berlin, and the putschists from among the right, led by Wolfgang The idea of the landowner of the communist revolution in Germany with Red Army bayonets was constantly present in Ilyich.

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March 20 Commander-in-Chief S.S. Kamenev suggested to Lenin "in view of the importance of the Polish Front and in view of the seriousness of the operations to be done here ... by the time of decisive operations, to move to the Western Front the commander of the now Caucasian Front, Tukhachevsky, who skillfully and decisively carried out the last operations to defeat Denikin's armies." The reputation of Mikhail Nikolaevich as a commander was already so high that it was considered necessary to appoint him commander of the most important front. This time, Marshal Jozef Pilsudski acted as Tukhachevsky's opponent, who had much more significant experience of participation in the First World War than the 27-year-old commander of the Western Front. Marshal was twice as old - by the time of the battle under

He was 53 years old in Warsaw. In World War I, Pilsudski was in general positions - he commanded the 1st brigade of Polish legionnaires formed by him in the Austrian army, then he was the Minister of War of the Kingdom of Poland created by Germany and Austria-Hungary, before being imprisoned by the Germans in Magdeburg prison in 1917, after how he refused to allow Polish soldiers to take the oath of allegiance to the German Kaiser. The fact that Pilsudski was more experienced than Tukhachevsky in leading large masses of people in conditions of a more "correct" World War I than the Civil War helped him a lot. The Soviet-Polish war in many respects (the presence of lines of trenches and obstacles, the relatively high density of troops and artillery, and finally, the clash between two national armies) was nevertheless closer to the battles of 1914–1918 than to the combat practice of the Civil War in Russia. The victory on the Vistula became a real "finest hour" of the "chief of the Polish state" and helped him establish his dictatorship in Poland six years later. Who knows if Tukhachevsky had won then, would she have changed his fate, would she not have made a real "Soviet Bonaparte" in the future?

On April 25, the Polish offensive began in Ukraine, and on the 28th, the plan proposed by Tukhachevsky to defeat the Poles was approved. On the 29th, Mikhail Nikolayevich took command of the troops of the Western Front in

Smolensk. On May 7, the armies of Pilsudski and Petliura captured Kyiv and reached the Dnieper on a broad front, capturing bridgeheads on its eastern bank. To help the Soviet Southwestern Front, Tukhachevsky, without waiting for the concentration of all forces, launched an offensive on Molodechno and Borisov on May 14 and occupied these cities. On May 22, in the midst of the operation, he was highly honoured. Tukhachevsky, without graduating from the academy, was assigned to the General Staff. This act marked the recognition of the military art of the commander of the Western Front. In the order of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic issued on this occasion, the unusual decision was motivated as follows: "...M.N. Tukhachevsky joined the Red Army and, possessing natural military abilities, continued to continuously expand his theoretical knowledge in military affairs. Acquiring new theoretical knowledge in military affairs every day, M.N.

Tukhachevsky skillfully carried out the planned operations and excellently led the troops both as part of the army and commanding the armies of the fronts of the Republic and gave the Soviet Republic brilliant victories over its enemies on the Eastern and Caucasian fronts.

However, this time the victory, all the more brilliant, was still far away. On May 30, Polish troops counterattacked and restored the situation with the help of the approaching reserves. Only the 15th army of A.I. Korka was able to hold a small foothold in the Polotsk region. Tukhachevsky did not have any reserves. He put all his strength into the first strike, counting on creating reserves later, from new divisions being transferred from the Caucasian and Eastern fronts, from Petrograd and the interior districts. But these divisions were late for the start of the Polish counteroffensive. Meanwhile, near Kiev, the 1st Cavalry Army of Budyonny, which went on the offensive on the same day as the start of the Polish counterattack in Belarus, broke through the front and on June 8 cut off the supply lines to the Kiev group of Poles. Polish troops began to hastily retreat from the Dnieper. Pilsudski, counting that Tukhachevsky's armies had not yet recovered from the defeat suffered, transferred several divisions from Belarus to fight Budyonny's cavalry, which he considered not so difficult to defeat. The marshal's calculations were based on the experience of the First World War, when the cavalry showed complete helplessness in the conditions of positional warfare, a solid front line, full profile trenches, barbed wire and saturation of the troops with artillery and machine guns. However, in the Soviet-Polish war there was a completely different density of troops and especially fire weapons. There were no continuous lines of trenches, in most cases there was no barbed wire - a terrible enemy of the cavalry. The Poles failed to defeat the 1st Cavalry, and

Tukhachevsky, taking advantage of the weakening of the Polish forces in front of the Western Front, received significant reinforcements on July 4, including the 3rd Cavalry Corps of the State Duma. Guy, went on the offensive with the most decisive goals. The main blow was delivered on the right flank, which was supposed to pass along the borders of Lithuania and East Prussia. It was planned to encircle several Polish divisions in the Germanovichi-Luzhki-Glubokoe area, while the main part of the enemy troops opposing the Western Front was driven

in swampy Polesie. In his memoirs, Tukhachevsky stated: "By the 7th, it became clear with complete certainty that the enemy troops were completely defeated in the area of \u200b\u200bour main offensive." However, in reality, the Poles managed to retreat without heavy losses. On July 11, Tukhachevsky's troops occupied Minsk, on July 14 - Vilna, on July 15 - Molodechno, on the 19th - Baranovichi and Grodno, and on the 23rd - Pinsk. The armies of the Polish North-Eastern Front were retreating.

The capture of Warsaw, the crushing of Poland as a prologue to the world proletarian revolution was seen by Tukhachevsky as a great deed, only slightly inferior in significance to the October Revolution. Even before the start of the July operation, he issued a famous order directing the fighters and commanders of the Western Front to crush "White Poland", to the last decisive attack on the Polish capital coming in the near future: "Fighters of the workers' revolution! Set your eyes on the West. The fate of the world revolution is being decided in the West. Through the corpse of white Poland lies the path to the world conflagration. On bayonets we will bring happiness and peace to working mankind. To the West! .. To Vilna, Minsk, Warsaw - march!

Three years later, in the book *The Campaign for the Vistula*, Tukhachevsky reflected on why the brilliantly launched offensive ended in disaster: "The main reasons for the death of the operation can be recognized as an insufficiently serious attitude to the preparation of command and control. Technical means were not available in sufficient quantities, largely due to the fact that they were not given due attention. Further, the unpreparedness of some of our higher commanders made it impossible to correct the shortcomings of technical management on the ground. The discrepancy in time for the decisive engagement at almost right angles between the main forces of the Western and Southwestern Fronts predetermined the failure of the operation just at the moment when the Western Front was launched on the offensive beyond the Vistula. The absurd actions of the 4th Army wrested victory from our hands and ultimately led to our catastrophe.

The former commander of the Western Front also used such a traditional argument of all the beaten commanders as the alleged overwhelming superiority of the enemy in the number of troops. Tukhachevsky assured his readers and listeners that the Western Front at the final stage of the operation had no more than 40

thousands of bayonets and sabers, while in the Polish troops opposing him there were more than 70 thousand bayonets and sabers.

How did events actually develop and why did Tukhachevsky's armies for the first and last time in his life were defeated? The idea of the actual Warsaw operation was, as always with Tukhachevsky, brilliant. The commander of the Western Front decided to take the Polish capital by a deep detour from the north. He mistakenly believed that the main forces of the Polish army were withdrawing in this direction. In addition, the offensive in the north brought the Red Army to the Danzig corridor and the borders of East Prussia. Thus, the main line of supplying Poland with military materials from France and England through the port of Danzig (Gdansk) was cut and there was a real chance to bring revolution to Germany on bayonets. Even after suffering a defeat near Warsaw, Tukhachevsky refused to believe that the national consciousness of the majority of Polish workers and peasants rejected the ideas of the communist revolution, and the Red Army and Soviet Russia from the very beginning of the war were perceived by the bulk of the Poles as the heir to the tsarist army and the Russian Empire. The beaten commander tried to prove that only the defeat of the Reds in the Battle of Warsaw contributed to the spread of the opinion that the Poles had a predominance of national feeling over class feeling, while in the event of the victory of the Soviet troops, everything would be the other way around: "Talking about the awakened national feeling among the Polish working class in connection with our offensive are, of course, the consequence of our losing the campaign. Fear has big eyes. We must not forget that when we approached Warsaw, the working population of Prague (the Warsaw suburb. - **B.S.**), Lodz and other workers' centers were mutely worried, but were crushed by the bourgeois Polish volunteer units. The expectation of a revolution in Poland, as a meeting of our offensive, as a result of the defeat of the instrument of coercion in the hands of the Polish bourgeoisie, had serious grounds and, if not for our defeat, it would have been crowned with complete success. But Pilsudski refuted Tukhachevsky on this point. The Polish marshal remarked sarcastically: "Mr. Tukhachevsky led his troops to the Vistula and beyond the Vistula in the name and for the sake of planting by force what he calls revolution. Accordingly,

he chose the name

chapters (in the book "The Campaign for the Vistula." - **B.S.**) - "Revolution from the outside." But the aim of the war, outlined in such words, already in itself clearly shows that the internal revolution did not exist among us if it had to be brought from outside on the edge of bayonets. In any case, there is no doubt about the fact ... that Soviet Russia waged war with us under the slogan of imposing its own, i.e., Soviet system on us Poles, and this goal she called "revolution from outside." That the Soviets pursued just such a goal in the war was well known to me from the very beginning, so I want to note right away that I personally fought so that this revolution would not be brought to us from outside on Soviet bayonets. And he continued: "Mr. Tukhachevsky does not want to see that during the whole war that the Soviets waged with us, in the near, and even more in the deep rear of the front turned against us, other Soviet troops and other brothers of Mr. Tukhachevsky did not they did nothing else, as soon as they suppressed with difficulty this or that uprising against the Soviets! Yes, and most of the army of Mr. Tukhachevsky started a war with us only after they suppressed various uprisings somewhere in the depths of Soviet Russia. Nothing like this happened in Poland. And the troops, if only they were assembled, could freely be sent to fight those who stand in front of the front, and not those who are behind it! During the entire war, only in a few places did I have to send small detachments, and even then not for combat, but to carry out mass searches and seize weapons with which I could be threatened. I remember how to one high representative of one of the Western states, who ... like Mr. Tukhachevsky, expected that something should "seeth" and "gurgel", I showed how railways and telegraphs work in my rear without any protection. Maybe Mr. Tukhachevsky will see in this, as in other places, the underdevelopment of the "revolution" and, on the contrary, in the uprisings, which he himself fought in the rear of his front, an excess of counter-revolution. In the military strategy and calculations, these words do not change anything. The facts show that Mr. Tukhachevsky was mistaken in his calculations, but I had no mistake either in my heart or in my thoughts ... In achieving my goal - to leave the widest possible space between Warsaw and the Soviets - I acted like a person who knows the theater of war like the back of your hand; everyone here took me for his own, and not for someone else, and spoke to me in a language that was completely understandable to me. And I saw well that

the vast majority of the population regarded the Soviets and their rule with deep distrust, and often with obvious hostility, seeing in them - justifiably or unreasonably, it also does not matter for the strategy - rampant unbearable terror, which was called Jewish. Therefore, during the entire war, I did not feel anxiety for my rear, that some kind of

insurrection".

Tukhachevsky, in his "Campaign for the Vistula," drew bright prospects not only for the Polish, but also for the German revolution: "The workers of Germany openly opposed the Entente, drove the echelons with equipment and weapons that France sent to Poland in the opposite direction, did not allow the unloading of the French and English ships with ammunition and weapons in Danzig, derailed trains and so on - in a word, they waged an active revolutionary struggle in favor of Soviet Russia. From East Prussia, when we came into contact with it, hundreds and thousands of volunteers, Spartacists, non-party workers flowed to us under the banner of the Red Army, forming into the German Rifle Brigade ... So, Germany was revolutionary bubbling and for the final outbreak was only waiting for contact with the armed stream of the revolution ". And he made an unconditional conclusion: "A revolution from outside was possible. Capitalist Europe was shaken to its foundations, and if not for our strategic mistakes, not for our military defeat, then perhaps the Polish campaign would have been a link between the October revolution and the West European revolution "(in the last phrase, Tukhachevsky combined space and time in a rather original way, Western Europe with October). The 27-year-old front commander dreamed of solving the main, as it seemed to him, the question of our time with his victorious march on Warsaw - to ensure the triumph of the world proletarian revolution. And, at first glance, his arguments in favor of continuing the offensive

seem convincing. But only if you do not pay attention to the obvious contradictions in the text of the "Campaign for the Vistula". Indeed, in another place, as we remember, Tukhachevsky claimed that the German workers had successfully sabotaged military supplies to Poland and were impatiently waiting for the Red Army to finally bring the revolution to Germany on their bayonets. Polish

the workers and peasants allegedly did nothing but tremble their own bourgeoisie and prepared to join the ranks of the Polish Red Army, which "began to take shape at an accelerated pace", but the trouble was, it did not have time to turn into something tangible by the time the Soviet troops were defeated. And suddenly it turns out that the Entente, it turns out, does not experience, despite German sabotage, any special difficulties in supplying Pilsudski with everything necessary, and the Polish bourgeoisie successfully and in a short time creates numerous volunteer units - really from students and merchants alone, as Soviet propaganda assured ? The solution here, I think, is quite simple. In those chapters of the book where

Tukhachevsky needed to justify his adventurist plan of attack on Warsaw, he emphasized the weakness and demoralization of the ^{enough} Polish bourgeoisie and army and the strength and enthusiasm of the Polish proletariat and laborers. When the commander of the Western Front needed to explain the catastrophe by objective conditions beyond his control, the theses about numerous Polish reserves and the ability of the bourgeoisie to crush the "nascent" Polish revolution were used.

How did Tukhachevsky really assess the situation on the eve and in the days of the Warsaw battle? Most likely, then he was sure that the enemy was defeated and retreating in panic, which creates favorable conditions for the Polish revolution, which, in turn, will help the Red Army to complete the defeat of Pilsudski's troops. This is the only way to explain the actions taken by Tukhachevsky to prepare and conduct the Warsaw operation.

In fact, there were cases of panic and disorderly retreat among the Poles, attempts were made to form units of the Polish Red Army. However, the scale of these phenomena in intelligence reports and lower-level commanders, as usual, was greatly exaggerated. The long-standing ailment of the Russian army, noted by the critically thinking Baron Budberg, had an effect - "love for exaggerated and false reports." As a result, Tukhachevsky did not have a correct idea of the state of the enemy troops. The rosy reports of the army commanders and divisional commanders about the defeat of the "White Poles" were uncritically perceived by the young commander of the Western

front. It was self-deception. We can agree with the commander of the 1st Cavalry S.M. Budyonny: "From the operational reports of the Western Front, we saw that the Polish troops, retreating, do not suffer heavy losses. It seemed that the enemy was withdrawing before the armies of the Western Front, saving forces for decisive battles ... I think that M.N. Tukhachevsky was largely influenced by the excessive optimism of Smilga, a member of the RVS of the Western Front, and the chief of staff of the front, Schwartz. The first of them convinced that the fate of Warsaw was already a foregone conclusion, and the second presented ... to the commander-in-chief, and therefore to the commander of the front, erroneous information about the superiority of the forces of the Western Front over the enemy by one and

a half times. Well, it's hard to judge whether they're wrong or not. It is a painfully delicate question in all wars, not excluding the Soviet-Polish one, about the balance of forces and the losses of the parties. But there is no doubt that Tukhachevsky and the Revolutionary Military Council of the Western Front greatly exaggerated the capabilities of their troops and seriously underestimated the enemy. On July 19, Tukhachevsky suggested to Commander-in-Chief Kamenev "to consider the attack of the Cavalry in the south-western direction in order to pass the fortifications in the area poorly occupied by the enemy and win the flank of the Poles like Guy's Concorps." By that time, Kamenev himself had come to the conclusion that it was expedient for the troops of the Southwestern Front to act in this direction, which he reported in his reply to Tukhachevsky. On July 22, the commander of the Southwestern Front, A.I. Egorov and members of the Revolutionary Military Council I.V. Stalin and R.I. Berzin sent a telegram to the commander-in-chief, where they proposed to change the direction of the main attack of the troops subordinate to them from Lublin to Lvov. This strategic decision was motivated by the fact that "the Poles are putting up very stubborn resistance, with particular stubbornness in the Lvov direction", and that "the situation with Romania remains indefinitely tense." The next day, the Revolutionary Military Council

approved the proposal of Yegorov, Stalin and Berzin. Thus began the divergence of the Western and Southwestern fronts, which had previously been concentrically advancing on the Polish capital. The Soviet command clearly underestimated the enemy. I wanted to capture not only Warsaw, but also Lvov, and at the same time deal with the "Romanian boyars". The main blow was delivered by the northern wing of the Western Front in order to cut the D

block the path of Anglo-French aid to Poland. Kamenev and Tukhachevsky, logically arguing, believed that the Polish command perfectly understood the importance of Danzig (Gdansk) for supplying its army with everything necessary and would spare no effort to protect the northern transport artery, so that the most powerful grouping of Polish troops would be concentrated here. Its defeat will predetermine the fate of Warsaw. In

fact, the main part of the Polish troops at that moment was concentrated against the Southwestern Front, where they unsuccessfully tried to defeat Budyonny's cavalry. Their transfer to the north was fraught with many difficulties. Transport was upset by the war, and the troops themselves did not have experience in complex regroupings. Therefore, Pilsudski planned, in order to reduce troop movements to a minimum, to concentrate the most combat-ready divisions from Ukraine to strike from the south into the flank of the Soviet Western Front. He wrote: "... My general strategic plan was: 1) the Northern Front should only gain time; 2) to carry out energetic training of reserves in the country - I sent them to the Bug, without getting involved in the battles of the Northern Front; 3) put an end to Budyonny and transfer large forces from the south for the counteroffensive that I was planning from the Brest area. I stuck to this basic idea to the very end. The Poles failed to "end Budyonny". But in the area of Brody Cavalry in early August was defeated. Only the fall of Brest forced the Polish command to abandon the counterattack on the Bug and withdraw troops beyond the Vistula.

As a matter of fact, Trotsky alone advocated for the only reasonable decision in those conditions to "abandon completely" the attack on Warsaw, to stop on the Western Bug and seek the conclusion of peace. But his voice was not heard. The Central Committee decided to attack. Tukhachevsky demanded the unification under his command of both fronts operating against Poland after reaching the Bug and occupying Brest-Litovsk. Later, it was precisely the delay of such a union that he explained the failure near Warsaw. However, in his memoirs, he actually admitted that he was not able to control the troops of the Southwestern Front, because he did not have means of communication: "... Swampy Polesie did not allow direct interaction between the Western Front and the Southwestern Front ... When ... we tried

to carry out the unification, it turned out that it was almost impossible due to the complete lack of means of communication. The Western Front could not establish the latter with the South-Western. With the unfortunate means at our disposal, we could not complete this task soon, not earlier than August 13-14, and since the end of July the situation insistently demanded the immediate unification of all these troops under a common command ... Expecting to receive from day to day in their submission to the 12th and 1st Cavalry armies, the command of the Western Front had already predetermined them to pull up to the left flank of the main armies of the front, but the matter was delayed, and this task remained hanging in the air.

Tukhachevsky's calculations turned out to be built on sand. On August 2, the Politburo decided to unite the troops of the two fronts under his command. However, the transfer to the Western Front of the 1st Cavalry and 12th Armies was not immediately possible. On August 8, Tukhachevsky proposed to the headquarters of the Southwestern Front to create a temporary operational center to control these armies, since "the situation requires an urgent unification of the armies, and we do not have the means to quickly establish comprehensive communication with them." Egorov and Stalin did not object, but believed that the operational point should be created by the forces and means of the Western Front, so as not to split up the headquarters of the South-Western, which was to lead the troops operating against Wrangel. "Any other solution to the problem," they argued, "we consider harmful to the cause in general, in particular to achieve success over Wrangel." Here, the local interests of the leadership of the Southwestern Front, who did not want to complicate their lives when organizing operations against Wrangel, manifested themselves. In addition, Yegorov and Stalin hoped that Lvov was about to fall, and expected to reap the glory of the conquerors of the capital of Eastern Galicia. Most importantly, euphoria still reigned in connection with the defeat of the "White Poles", which seemed to have already taken place. They thought that at the same time it was possible to destroy the last of the white armies - the Russian army of Baron P.A. Wrangel. At the same time, it was as if they forgot that the Polish Front remained the main theater of the war, and the Wrangel army that escaped from the Crimea, despite the capture of Northern Tavria, still could not threaten the rear of the Soviet troops advancing on Warsaw and Lvov.

Only on August 11 was an agreement reached on the turn of the 12th and 1st Cavalry armies to Warsaw. On this day, the commander-in-chief ordered the Cavalry to be withdrawn to the reserve, and the 12th to be redirected to Lublin. However, during the transfer of directives, the cipher was distorted and the leadership of the Southwestern Front was able to get acquainted with them only on August 13. And the day before, they had already thrown the 1st Cavalry to the "last decisive" assault on Lvov, although they had no right to do so. Budyonny's cavalry, by order of the commander-in-chief, was in reserve and could be brought into battle only **with his** consent. Stalin and Yegorov hoped to quickly take Lvov, and then send troops to help the Western Front or even, as Stalin suggested, immediately to the Crimean sector of the front, if everything was already over near Warsaw. Tukhachevsky, meanwhile, demanded the immediate transfer of both armies to him. The Commander-in-Chief issued the corresponding directive, demanding the transfer of the armies by noon on August 14th. The Revolutionary Military Council of the Southwestern Front objected, since the Cavalry and the 12th Army were already involved in the battles for Lvov and it was not possible to immediately move them north. In fact, according to Budyonny in his memoirs, at that moment the Cavalry was still advancing to Lvov and started fighting with the enemy's rearguards. It could still be turned to Grubeshov and Zamostye to assist

Tukhachevsky's troops. However, Yegorov and Stalin continued to drive the cavalry to Lvov. Meanwhile, Tukhachevsky continued to make a deep detour of the Polish capital from the north. On August 8, he gave the order to cross the Vistula on the 14th. Four armies advance north of Warsaw - 3rd, 4th, 15th and 16th. Together with them, Guy's 3rd cavalry corps broke forward, threatening the Polish rear and, like the Budyonnovsk Cavalry, forcing the Poles to rapidly roll back. South of the Polish capital, only the weak Mozyr group of T.S. Khvesina. Tukhachevsky reinforced it with the 58th division from the 12th army. He feels some kind of vague anxiety about his left flank, exposed due to the lagging behind of the Southwestern Front. But there is no concrete data on the concentration of forces here by the Poles for a

counterattack. And this concentration is already unfolding with might and main. On August 13, Piysudski took command of the Middle Front and arrived at his headquarters in Puławy on the right bank of the Vistula. The Polish

the winner of the Russian "supreme ruler". Perhaps, for the only time in the entire Civil War, Tukhachevsky had against him a commander worthy of his talent, and troops that differed significantly in morale from the hastily recruited white armies of Kolchak and Denikin, literally from under the stick. Unlike the Polish commander-in-chief, the commander of the Western Front chose to follow the decisive events near Warsaw from afar, all the while remaining at the front headquarters in Minsk. Maybe it was a mistake. It is possible that on the spot Tukhachevsky would still be able to discern the impending danger, and if not prevent the catastrophe, then reduce its size. However, only from Minsk did he have a more or less reliable connection with all subordinate armies, and there were no guarantees that when moving to the west it would be possible to maintain it at least at the same level. So, who knows, it would not have been even worse if Tukhachevsky, before the start of the attack on Warsaw, had decided to move, say, to Brest, to the headquarters of the Mozyr group.

Then, after the war, Tukhachevsky explained his defeat by the numerical superiority of the enemy and the failure of the command of the Southwestern Front to comply with the commander-in-chief's order to transfer the 1st Cavalry Army near Warsaw. Well, about the numerical superiority, he is certainly not original. At all times and among all peoples, the losers tried to attribute their failures to the numerical superiority of the enemy, even when there was no such superiority at all. If you read example, the Patriotic, the Soviet historiography of the Great, for then you will get the strong impression that the Germans were superior to the Red Army in people and equipment until the 43rd year, and sometimes even in the 44th and almost in the 45th. As for the problem of turning the armies of the Southwestern Front to Warsaw, it was discussed in the Soviet Union from the beginning of the 20s until the beginning of the 90s, and, depending on the political situation, it was decided in favor of Stalin, Yegorov, Voroshilov and Budyonny, then in favor of Tukhachevsky and the Revolutionary Military Council of the Western Front. Let's see how things really were.

Mikhail Nikolaevich insisted: "The Western Front had only 40,000 bayonets in its ranks. On the other hand, the Polish forces increased to more than 70,000, according to our intelligence data of that time, but in fact they were even more. And elsewhere

repeated for persuasiveness: "According to our calculations, the enemy, who had grown in number, had ... up to 70,000 bayonets and cavalry troops ... The forces of the Western Front did not exceed 40,000 bayonets and cavalry troops." Pilsudski frankly laughed at this arithmetic: "... The most amusing are the clearly biased calculations and results ... showing the balance of power before the start of the main Soviet operation on July 4, which ended near Warsaw. A heading has been added at the very bottom of the table: reserve battalions and squadrons of active regiments. For us, they are shown by the figure of 27,000 bayonets and 1,200 cavalry, ready to join the ranks. On the Russian side, instead of bayonets and sabers, we find only three stars, which do not mean any number, but explain that battalions and squadrons are already included in the divisions ... It is not known why some of our infantry divisions by some miracle appeared cavalry in a constantly repeating number 400 sabers, while other divisions were not blessed with such a gift ... Such a strange calculation of the ratio of our and Soviet forces, full of gross errors, could be a very sad evidence of the poor work of the Soviet headquarters in the troops commanded by Mr. Tukhachevsky, if not its obvious propaganda and journalistic orientation ... expressed in the fact that in the final result, in the amount displayed at the bottom of the columns, tendentiously exaggerate our strengths and, conversely, downplay our own. For his

part, the Polish commander-in-chief, like Baron Budberg, already familiar to us, was very critical of the reports of his subordinates and called for similar healthy criticism to be applied to Soviet reports on the number of troops: "The quantitative composition of our forces can be judged on the basis of reports periodically submitted by commanders of various parts. However, anyone who wants to rely only on these data, I, as a historian, must warn against this rash step. First of all, because any report, no matter what information it contains, from a historical point of view, can be considered a reliable source only after a critical analysis, because reports are written for superiors, they always have the goal of not only reporting something, but and implicitly incline the chief to certain thoughts, to certain decisions regarding the writer of this report. If this happens in armies with

deep traditions and a long time ago, to the smallest detail, a system of personnel training worked out, then what can we say about our army, recently formed and, if we are talking about commanders consisting of people, in fact, randomly assembled from a variety of armies and schools. It is for this reason that I have never taken seriously enough the reports of our commanders on the strength of the troops. I always made one summary amendment to them, namely: in our army, the system of seconding many people from combat units to the near or far rear to perform work in the interests of the troops or commanders and for various economic needs (in the Red, and especially later, Soviet, Army, this system of "economic use" of soldiers, including for the construction of generals' dachas and weeding of commander's gardens, flourished. - **B. S.**). In the reports, these seconded were never or almost never indicated, and for the authorities they were considered permanently in the regiments. Our connivance in this respect has gone too far, and I do not recall even one case when one of the commanders applied strict disciplinary measures here. Therefore, always, when receiving reports on the number of armies, I entered into the final report ... a total correction ... - at least a third of the people who were considered bayonets and sabers, I did not count in combat

compound...

I do not at all want to say that the Soviet army did not know such a system of economic detachment of bayonets and sabers. Moreover, I am sure that it was. Nevertheless ... the discipline of our enemy was extremely tough, often even cruel, and the measures taken to maintain it were so severe that, I think, the enemy commander did not need to make such sad calculations as I did.

The Polish "supreme leader" believed that in the Red Army the percentage of fighters in relation to the total number of eaters, due to tougher disciplinary measures against deserters and those who evaded participation in battle, was significantly higher, and estimated it to 25%. Since there were about 795 thousand people in the Western Front in August 1920, for the period of the Warsaw battle

Pilsudski estimated Tukhachevsky's forces at 130-150 thousand fighters, and the Polish troops opposing them at 120-180 thousand. Such an assessment seems closer to the truth than the one contained in the "Campaign for the Vistula". After the Warsaw disaster, more than 80 thousand people from the Western Front were captured by the Polish, and more than 40 thousand were interned in East Prussia. Basically, these were those who in military jargon are called bayonets and sabers - after all, the rear managed to run away for the Western Bug and escape. In addition, many fighters and commanders found death in battle, and some, albeit a small part of the combat units of the Western Front, managed to avoid death. How did over 100,000 prisoners and internees come about if, according to Tukhachevsky's assurances, his front had only 70,000 bayonets and cavalry? No, in all likelihood, in the Battle of Warsaw, the forces of the opponents were equal. It is even possible that Tukhachevsky had a slight numerical superiority, but it could not help him in any way. Piysudski's plan was that the Polish strike group would successively smash the Reds piecemeal, proving at every given moment stronger than the troops opposing it: first the Mozyr group, and then the divisions of the 16th Army that were separately engaged in battle. Tukhachevsky believed that if

he had received the Cavalry in time, it would have been possible not only to prevent the defeat of the front, but also to take Warsaw. Many years later, he interrupted the question of one of the employees of the headquarters of the Red Army V.N. Ladukhin about the Battle of Warsaw "I can't fully understand why all of a sudden in August ..." with a characteristic remark: "In war, "suddenly" often happens. But it wasn't quite "suddenly" here. You are not the first one I hear this question from. And I always advise: turn, as in all difficult cases, to Lenin. After all, he clearly said that we then overestimated the superiority of our forces. This equally applies to the main command, and to the command of both fronts - the Western and South-Western. And in response to the interlocutor's timid attempt to object, Mikhail Nikolaevich continued: "I understand that you are interested in particulars. But they are inseparable from the common cause. The command of the Western Front, developing the offensive, had every reason to make some amendments to the operational plan by the end of the summer of the twentieth year. Sergei Sergeevich Kamenev did not object to the maneuver of the armies of the Western Front

at first, he was not particularly worried about the left flank of the Western Front, which was supposed to be reinforced by three armies from the Southwestern Front. The appearance at the scheduled time of even one Cavalry army in the Lublin region would have thwarted Pilsudski's counterattack ... "Here Tukhachevsky referred to the well-known words of Lenin:" During our offensive, advancing too quickly almost to Warsaw, a mistake was undoubtedly made ... This mistake was caused by the fact that the superiority of our forces was overestimated by us. Both the chairman of the Council of People's Commissars and the commander of the Western Front turned out to

In the book *The Campaign for the Vistula*, Tukhachevsky described the events related to the reassignment of the 1st Cavalry as follows: "The high command, given the need to consolidate the left flank of the Western Front, on August 11 at 3 o'clock gives the Southwestern Front a directive on the need to change the grouping of forces of the South-Western Front. Western Front and in the most urgent manner to move the Cavalry Army in the direction of Zamostye - Grubeshov. The calculation of time and space shows that this directive of the High Command could certainly be carried out before the transition of the southern Polish grouping to the offensive. If the execution had been somewhat late, then the Polish units that had gone on the offensive would have been faced with the inevitability of a complete defeat, having received a blow from our victorious Cavalry Army in the rear. The commander of the Western Front was sure that only one and a half Polish cavalry divisions and "Ukrainian partisan units" were operating against the Cavalry. The latter refers to the Ukrainian army of General Pavlenko. It numbered over 11 thousand fighters, but had only 2 guns and 29 machine guns and was not a serious military force. However, Tukhachevsky was mistaken. At that moment, much larger forces were concentrated against the Cavalry - not only the Polish cavalry, but also a considerable fraction of the infantry. Piysudski did not miss a chance to laugh at the defeated enemy: "In relation to our actions, Mr. Tukhachevsky has another strange misunderstanding. He claims that we have removed almost all the troops from Eastern Galicia, leaving only the Ukrainian formations of Petlyura and General Pavlenko with one Polish cavalry division there. True, he himself doubts this and specifies that some infantry divisions, like fragments of our army, could still remain there. But, while approving this boldness of ours elsewhere, he

most, it seems to me, is looking for an opportunity to exaggerate the Polish forces gathered against him and at the same time accuse his southern colleagues of not helping him during the rout near Warsaw. However, things were completely different. Only the 18th division and a small part of the cavalry were taken out of our 6th army, while the 12th, 13th and half of the 6th division remained in place. In addition, the 5th division arrived there, badly battered in the battles in the north ... "The Polish commander-in-chief generally considered Tukhachevsky's calculations for help from the 1st Cavalry and 12th armies unfounded, he argued that in any eventuality they would not have had time arrive in time to influence the outcome of the Warsaw battle: "I confess that both during the war itself, and ... and during its analytical analysis, I cannot get rid of the impression that Mr. Tukhachevsky did not at all count on interaction with the south, because he set himself such a distant goal as forcing the Vistula between Plock and Modlin ... And it was pointless to associate the achievement of such a deep goal with the actions of the 12th Army, timidly shifting from foot to foot at the Bug, and with the actions of Budyonny's battered army, which during a few days after the failure near Brody did not show any signs of life. If the concentration of Soviet troops near Warsaw (which, by the way, I expected) moved Mr. Tukhachevsky more than 200 kilometers from the 12th Army on the Bug, then the "campaign behind the Vistula" in its lower reaches behind Warsaw (which I did not expect at all) added a good hundred kilometers to this distance, turning into a complete illusion the interaction with the 12th Army remaining somewhere far in the east. If the Cavalry really began

its maneuver to the north on August 11, according to the directive of the commander-in-chief, then it could go to the rear of the Polish strike group before the success of the counteroffensive from Vepsh was determined, it could only if the Lvov group of Poles remained inactive and Budennovsky cavalrymen would march without any obstacles, as if on exercises. But we have already seen that it was precisely such a maneuver that the Polish command feared and planned to detain Budyonny at any cost. The Poles had enough strength for this. And the commander of the 1st Cavalry himself believed that his troops could not immediately turn from Lvov to Lublin in those days: "... All attempts by the commander-in-chief to change the Cavalry

infantry and completely withdraw it to the reserve since August 6 were not successful. On August 13, speaking on a direct wire with the commander of the Western Front, he stated that the Cavalry was still standing in front of a wall of infantry, which it still had not been able to crush. It turns out that Tukhachevsky knew that in front of the Southwestern Front there were not "partisan units", but an "indestructible wall of infantry", and he was cunning in his book in order to justify himself before history.

Budyonny pointed out that later, on August 16, when Tukhachevsky's directive was finally received to withdraw the cavalry from the battle and concentrate it in the Vladimir-Volynsky area for a strike in the Lublin direction, it was even more impossible than five days earlier. The cavalry fought heavy battles beyond the Bug, and there was no one to replace it. Semyon Mikhailovich argued that "it was physically impossible to withdraw from the battle within one day and make a hundred-kilometer march in order to concentrate in the indicated area on August 20. And if this impossible had happened, then with access to Vladimir-Volynsky, the Cavalry would still not be able to take part in the operation against the enemy's Lublin grouping, which ... operated in the Brest region, that is, much to the east. So, in fact, it was difficult for Tukhachevsky to blame his neighbors for his own failure.

The commander of the Western Front hoped that, having "against the right flank of the Polish main grouping at least 14 ... rifle divisions and the 3rd cavalry corps" and given the "moral superiority", one could count on victory. He neglected intelligence data. As early as August 10, the order of the command of the 3rd Polish Army dated August 8 fell into the hands of the fighters of the 1st Cavalry, where the task was set to withdraw to concentrate in the Vepsha area. Tukhachevsky and the commander-in-chief considered the order disinformation. The fact is that in order to cover the retreat, the 1st and 3rd divisions of the legionnaires attacked and pressed the formations of the 12th army. Therefore, the command of the Southwestern Front decided that the divisions listed in the order were still in their previous positions and were not going to regroup. Tukhachevsky and Kamenev believed Yegorov and Stalin. Until the start of the Polish counter-offensive, the Western Front was never able to open the concentration of the enemy strike force. The front commander was convinced that almost the entire Polish army was concentrated in Warsaw and to the north of it. He went on

carry out your intention. Meanwhile, on August 14, the 5th Polish Army launched a counteroffensive, and one incident caused by this counteroffensive turned out, according to Tukhachevsky, to be fatal for the outcome of the entire Warsaw battle: "The field headquarters of the 4th Army, which went over to the city of Tsekhanov during the offensive, was unexpectedly attacked by small enemy units that had broken through between the 4th and 15th armies and had to hastily withdraw and leave for the West to their units. Such an act broke the connection between the headquarters of the front and the 4th army, which was no longer restored until the beginning of our retreat, which, of course, happened due to the complete absence of any strategic means at our disposal.

connections".

Tukhachevsky thought that Sikorsky's troops would be easy prey: "The 5th Army, the weakest in number of units and the weakest in spirit, went on the offensive against our 15th and 3rd armies, when the freshest, most combat-ready troops hung over their bare left flank. our units of the 4th Army. The joy of this event for the front command was extremely great, and it gave the order to the 15th and 3rd armies on the entire front to meet the enemy offensive with a decisive counterattack and throw it back across the Wkra River; The 4th Army, leaving a barrier in the direction of Torn, with all its forces to attack the enemy who went on the offensive to the flank and rear in the Novogeorgievsk (Modlin. - B.S.) direction from the Racibuzh - Drobin region. It seemed that the death of the 5th army of the enemy was inevitable and its destruction would entail the most decisive consequences in the further course of all our operations. But the good-hearted dreams of the zap teams again, as had happened more than once in his combat practice, were shattered by the almighty "suddenly". Tukhachevsky explained the failure that had befallen him this way: "... The Poles were lucky. Our 4th Army, where the new commander (in early August, a few days before the last offensive on Warsaw, E.N. Sergeev was replaced by the chief of staff A.D. Shuvaev. - B.S.) lost contact **with** the Front Headquarters, did not was aware of the prevailing situation. Not receiving orders from the front, she set up some kind of shapeless half-screen in the Racibórz-Drobin area and scattered her main forces in the Wýocýawsk-Pýock section. The 5th army of the enemy turned out to be saved and with complete impunity, having ours on the flank and in the rear

powerful army of four rifle and two cavalry divisions, continued the offensive against the 3rd and 15th armies. In the

light of subsequent events, Tukhachevsky's joy remains a complete mystery. After all, even if the 4th Army did not lose communication with the front headquarters and defeated the 5th Polish Army, this could only affect the outcome of the battle for the worse for the Reds. Firstly, even in this case, Sikorsky's troops would hardly have been completely destroyed. He had four and a half infantry divisions and up to two divisions of cavalry - a force practically equal to the forces of the 4th Army, moreover, they were in better conditions in terms of supplies and rather outnumbered the enemy morally, contrary to Tukhachevsky's assertion. Secondly, and most importantly, the planned counterattack against the 5th Polish Army, if carried out in full, would have taken the bulk of the troops of the Western Front to the northwest even further and would only have reduced their chances of salvation after the success of the counteroffensive of the Polish Middle Front. The

Mozyr group and the 58th division were defeated on the very first day of the Polish counterattack. The same fate befell the 8th Division of the 16th Army allocated to the front reserve. As the Polish military historian Captain Adam Borkiewicz notes, "On the evening of August 16, the Mozyr Group actually ceased to exist as an operational unit." The rout happened so quickly that parts of the group and its headquarters did not have time to inform either the headquarters of the 16th Army or the headquarters of the Western Front about the beginning of the Polish offensive. Tukhachevsky learned about the incident only on the 17th in the morning. He gave the order to his northern armies to start withdrawing to avoid the trap. The 16th Army and the Mozyr Group (that it no longer actually exists, the commander did not yet know) were to delay the Polish counterattack grouping, which was planned to be crushed by a strike on Lublin by the 1st Cavalry and 12th Army. Tukhachevsky suspected that "the lack of means of communication and the confused travels of the 4th Army along the Danzig corridor, apparently, did not allow Commander-4 to receive the given order in time." In fact, Commander Shuvaev received a directive to withdraw to the southeast. But it was impossible to assemble the divisions and brigades scattered far from each other in a short time. Therefore, Shuvaev, not realizing the seriousness of the situation on the left wing of the front, decided to act,

like a drunkard from a joke, looking for the keys not where he lost, but under a lantern, where it is light. Commander-4 ordered his troops and Guy's cavalry corps to continue operations to force the Vistula, which by that time had lost all meaning. The units of

the Western Front that found themselves behind enemy lines lost all combat capability. On the night of August 19-20, from Siedlce, which had been occupied three days earlier, Piysudski wrote to the Minister of War, General Sosnkowski: "It is hard to even imagine what is going on here. You can't drive safely along any road - so many broken and scattered, but also organized detachments with cannons and machine guns are wandering around the environs. So far, the local population and the rear services of our various divisions are coping with them, which, however, must go further, behind their divisions; after their departure, such a terrifying emptiness remains that if it were not for the armed peasants, then tomorrow or the day after tomorrow the vicinity of Siedlce would probably be in the grip of the Bolsheviks defeated and scattered by us, and I would be sitting in fortified cities with detachments of armed residents. Troops that armed peasants can easily deal with are already something more like a crowd with weapons, and not like a regular army. Tukhachevsky suddenly lost most of the divisions subordinate to him, and it was impossible to rely on the rest. He experienced one of the most difficult shocks in his life, comparable only to the German captivity. In fact, Tukhachevsky again found himself in captivity, in captivity of circumstances - cut off from the troops, powerless to change anything during the battle.

In the days of the Warsaw battle, a knot of hostile relations began between Tukhachevsky, on the one hand, and Voroshilov and Budyonny, on the other. In the 37th came the tragic denouement.

Many years later, Tukhachevsky discussed the details of the Battle of Warsaw with G.S. Isserson and I.P. Uborevich. Many years later, division commander G.S. Isserson, who for some reason was attested as a colonel after his release, conveyed the content of this conversation in this way: Warsaw. Uborevich said: he would make his way to his troops with any

means - by car, by plane, finally, on a horse - and, taking direct command, would lead them out of the encirclement ... After thinking, Tukhachevsky replied that the role of the front commander was then understood differently, and added that now, of course, to teach and it is impossible to educate the highest command staff on this example, and that in a difficult situation the highest commanders should take over the leadership of the troops. Near Warsaw, the troops of the Western Front were in a hopeless situation, and if Tukhachevsky had raised a company or regiment in a successful attack, this would not have replaced his lack of communication with divisions and armies, would not have caused a turning point in an unfavorable situation. The young commander of the front understood this very well.

The following confession in Mikhail Nikolayevich's book *New Questions of War*, written in the 1930s, looks like a self-critical assessment of one's own actions as commander of the Western Front: "Very often commanders were carried away by the whirlpool of events, and did not lead, organize, or accelerate it." So the whirlwind of the campaign against Warsaw and Berlin captured Tukhachevsky. It seemed that the Polish front was about to collapse, we had to hurry, otherwise the Entente would have time to help Pilsudski, there was no time for the subtleties of organization, the main thing was that the troops move forward faster. As a result, the Red

Army was utterly defeated. On October 12, 1920, the Soviet-Polish truce came into force, and on March 18, 21, the day when the troops under the command of Tukhachevsky stormed the rebellious Kronstadt, a peace treaty was signed in Riga. Poland in Belorussia held on to the line of the old German trenches, so that here the border ran roughly where the front had been established in the First World War. In the Ukraine, the Poles retained Eastern Galicia and Volhynia, which had been handed over to them by the Petliura government. The border passed here along the Zbruch River. The Petliurists and the People's Volunteer Army detachments of Bulak Balakhovich tried to continue the fight against the Red Army on their own, but were defeated in November 1920. Operations against Bulak-Balakhovich were led by Tukhachevsky, but this victory over poorly armed partisan groups was only very little consolation for the unsuccessful "campaign beyond the Vistula".

In March 1921, Tukhachevsky had to suppress the Kronstadt rebellion, which became the reaction of the masses to the policy of "military

communism" and, above all, for surplus appropriation. On March 2, a government message appeared, signed by Lenin and Trotsky: "February 28, p. in the city of Kronstadt, unrest began on the ship "Petropavlovsk". A Black Hundred-Socialist-Revolutionary resolution was adopted (?! - I wonder who came up with the idea to combine the incompatible, to harness the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the "Union of the Russian People" into one chariot, Vladimir Ilyich or Lev Davidovich? - B.S.) . Former General Kozlovsky with three officers, whose names have not yet been established, openly acted as rebels. On March 5, the day when the re-elections of the Kronstadt Soviet were supposed, Tukhachevsky arrived in Petrograd, leading the 7th Army, which by the end of the fighting had reached 45 thousand people. The Bolsheviks were very afraid that after the rebellion in Kronstadt, events in Petrograd would develop according to the same scenario as in February 1917: bread riots, demonstrations, soldiers and sailors going over to the side of the demonstrators and overthrowing the government. Therefore, they wanted to nip the uprising in the bud and quickly, even before the start of the Tenth Party Congress, which opened on March 8. Lenin, Trotsky and other leaders hurried Tukhachevsky. On March 6, a peaceful delegation of the Revolutionary Committee of four people, headed by the sailor Vershinin, heading for Petrograd, was arrested and subsequently shot. On the evening of March 7, artillery shelling of the fortress began. Fired 5,000 rounds. And at dawn the next day, 3,000 red cadets went to storm Kronstadt as a shock detachment (in total, 20,000 people were concentrated for the offensive). The calculation was made that the rebels would be taken by surprise, that they would not have time to organize a reliable defense immediately after the heated rallies, that they would be afraid to fight the Soviet troops and capitulate without bringing the matter to bloodshed. Lenin was so confident of success that on March 8, in a political report to the congress, he declared: "I still do not have the latest news from Kronstadt, but I have no doubt that this uprising, which quickly revealed to us the familiar figure of the White Guard generals, will be liquidated in the coming days, if not within the next few hours." But in the "next hours" did not work. With artillery fire from battleships and forts, the defenders of Kronstadt repulsed the attack. Advancing without camouflage robes

the cadets were an excellent target on the fragile spring ice. Almost all participants in the assault were killed or wounded.

In the meantime, on March 10, Lenin promised to raise the issue of replacing the surplus appropriation tax with a tax in kind, and on March 15 the 10th Party Congress adopted a corresponding decision. The Kronstadters came to the conclusion that now that their basic demand had been satisfied, it was pointless to continue resistance. Before the start of the uprising in Kronstadt, there were about 27 thousand military sailors and Red Army soldiers. Most decided to stay in their hometown and not resist the Soviet troops. Approximately a third of the garrison was about to leave for Finland, leaving a small rearguard of the most experienced naval marines to cover the retreat. On March 14, preparations for the retreat began. On the 16th, the covering detachments took up positions on the battleships and in the forts, and on the night of March 16-17, the

withdrawal to the Finnish coast began. Before the second assault, 300 delegates from the 10th Party Congress joined the units prepared for the attack on Kronstadt in order to stop any hesitation among the Red Army soldiers and lead them into battle. Tukhachevsky gave a combat order: "On the night of March 16 to March 17, seize the Kronstadt fortress with a swift assault ... Open artillery fire at 2 pm on March 16 and continue it until the evening ... "

In the morning of March 17, the Kronstadters, despite heavy artillery fire from the mainland, managed to repel the attacks of the Soviet troops. The twelve-inch guns of the battleships, when broken, made wide polynyas in the ice, which were immediately covered with a thin ice crust. Many attackers fell into them and went to the bottom like a stone. The Red Army also suffered heavy losses from shrapnel and rifle and machine-gun fire. Tukhachevsky thought to control the actions of the attackers by telephone, but in the very first minutes of the battle, the telephone wires were broken by shrapnel. So the commander had to be content with the role of a spectator. True, heavy fog prevented the observation of the battle. Only in the evening the forward detachments of the attackers broke into Kronstadt. At 2150 hours, Tukhachevsky gave a combat order for the complete capture of the fortress, Kotlin Island and the Reef battery. They were instructed "today to finally take possession of the city and introduce an iron

order ... When operating in the city, widely use artillery in street combat. In addition, the army commander sent a secret telegram about what to do with the defeated enemy: "It is cruel to deal with the rebels, shooting without any regret ... do not get carried away with prisoners." After the suppression of the uprising, more than 2,100 people were sentenced to death, and about 7,000 were sent to camps and prisons. In addition, several hundred Kronstadters were shot immediately after the assault. The

next step in Tukhachevsky's career was the suppression of the Tambov peasants - another test of loyalty to the Bolshevik leadership. At the end of April 1921, Mikhail Nikolayevich was appointed commander of the troops of the Tambov province, whose task was to suppress as soon as possible a powerful peasant uprising led by the former village teacher, Socialist-Revolutionary A.S. Antonov. On April 27, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the RCP (b) decided "to appoint Tukhachevsky as the sole commander of the troops in the Tambov district, making him responsible for the liquidation of Antonov's gangs. Give a period of one month for liquidation. Do not allow any interference in his affairs ... "After Kronstadt, the Commander was completely trusted. Forces under the command of Tukhachevsky were collected serious. The number of Soviet troops (with rears) exceeded 120 thousand people. Directly on the front line against the rebels, 53 thousand fighters, reinforced by 9 artillery brigades, 4 armored trains, 6 armored vehicles, 5 armored vehicles and 2 air squadrons, acted against the rebels. The Red Army did not know the lack of ammunition. 63 guns, 463 machine guns, 8 aircraft and 6 armored vehicles, Antonovites, numbering 18 thousand fighters, could oppose 5 guns and 25 machine guns, for which there was a catastrophic lack of shells and cartridges. The rebels, despite the sympathetic attitude on the part of the population and their ability to quickly disperse, leaving the blow, turn into peaceful tillers for a while, in order to then reassemble in armed detachments and resume the fight, were doomed and anyway, sooner or later would capitulate. But on April 20, when Tukhachevsky also met with Lenin, he promised the leader of the world proletariat to crush the uprising in the shortest possible time. And he took appropriate action.

On May 12, on the day of his arrival in Tambov, Tukhachevsky issued extermination order No. 130. A popular statement of this order on May 17 was published by the Plenipotentiary Commission of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee for Combating Banditry in the Tambov Province, titled as "Order to members of bandit gangs":

"1. The worker-peasant government decided to put an end to robbery and robbery in the Tambov province as soon as possible and restore peace and honest labor in it.

2. The workers' and peasants' government has sufficient military forces in the Tambov province. All those who raise arms against Soviet power will be exterminated.

To you. members of gangster gangs, one of two things remains: either die like mad dogs, or surrender to the mercy of the Soviet authorities.

1. In the name of the Workers 'and Peasants' Government Plenipotentiary the commission orders you:

Immediately stop the resistance of the Red Army, robbery and robbery, report to the nearest headquarters of the Red Army, hand over your weapons and hand over your leaders.

2. Those who hand over their

weapons, bring their leaders, and in general assist the Red Army in catching bandits, will be subject to widespread probation and, in special cases, complete forgiveness. According to the order of the Red Command No. 130 and the "Rules on taking hostages", published by the Plenipotentiary

Commission on May 12, the family of the evader is taken as hostages, and the property is seized."

By the end of May, in Tambov, Borisoglebsk, Kirsanov and other cities of the province, concentration camps for 15 thousand people were hastily set up and they tried to compile a list of "bandits" for each village. On May 28, the troops launched a decisive offensive against the rebels. By July 20, all large detachments of Antonovites were destroyed or dispersed.

On June 11, the most formidable order No. 171 was issued, signed by the chairman of the Plenipotentiary Commission V.A. Antonov-Ovseenko, commander of the troops M.N. Tukhachevsky, chairman of the provincial executive committee A.S. Lavrov and secretary of the provincial party committee B.A. Vasiliev. Now they turned from words to deeds: "... In order to finally

eradicate the SR-bandit roots and, in addition to the previously issued orders, the Plenipotentiary Commission of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee orders:

1. Citizens who refuse to give their names should be shot on the spot without trial.
2. To the villages

in which weapons are hidden, by the authority of the political commissions and district political commissions, announce orders to seize hostages and shoot them if they do not hand over their weapons.

3. If a hidden weapon is found, shoot the senior worker in the family on the spot without trial.
4. The family in whose house the bandit

has taken refuge is subject to arrest and expulsion from the province, its property is confiscated, the senior worker in the family is shot on the spot without trial.- 5. Families hiding family members or property of bandits are

considered as bandits and the senior worker of this family is shot on the spot without trial.

6. In the event of the flight of a bandit's family, its property should be distributed among the peasants loyal to Soviet power, and the houses left behind should be dismantled or burned.
7. This order is to be enforced severely

and mercilessly." The executions of hundreds of hostages and other inhuman repressions forced the peasants to abandon their support of the Antonovites. The uprising was put down. In July, Tukhachevsky used chemical weapons against the population hiding in

the forests, gaining the dubious priority of using asphyxiating gases against the civilian population. Due to a delay in supplying gas masks, the first gas attack was made only on 13 July. On this day, the artillery battalion of the brigade of the Zavolzhsky Military District used up 47 chemical shells. By that time, the uprising had actually already been drowned in blood. By July 15, no more than 1200 rebels remained in the Tambov province, driven into the forests, hungry, almost without cartridges, posing no real threat either to the restored bodies of Soviet power, or, even more so, to the 120,000th group of troops, which they began to prepare for returning to their places. former location. On July 16, Tukhachevsky reported to Lenin about the victory: "As a result of methodically carried out operations for 40 days, the uprising in the Tambov province was liquidated. STK (who led the uprising "Union of Labor

Peasantry", which was under the influence of the Socialist-Revolutionaries. - **B.S.)** defeated. Soviet power has been restored everywhere."

It would seem that since the uprising has been eliminated, the need for the use of chemical weapons has disappeared. But no! On August 3, the battery commander of the Belgorod artillery courses reported to the chief of artillery of the Inzhavinsky combat site: "Upon receiving a combat mission, the battery set out from the village at 8.00 on August 2. Inzhavino in the village Karay Saltykovo, from which, after a big bait at 14.00, she spoke on the p. Kipets. Having taken a position at 16.00, the battery opened fire on the island, which is on the lake 1.5 versts northwest of the village. Kipets. 65 shrapnels, 49 grenades and 59 chemical shells were fired. After completing the task, the battery returned to Inzhavino at 20.00.

The rebellious province was blocked, and there was no food supply there. And it is unlikely that in the conditions of the New Economic Policy, yesterday's rebels would have wanted to return to the forests after the end of the harvest campaign. But the Bolsheviks could not allow the Antonovites, who did not surrender, who did not admit their defeat, to return to peaceful work. This would mean at least partially recognizing the victory of the peasants and the defeat of the authorities. As in the case of Kronstadt, it was necessary to teach the rebels a substantive lesson, so that not only they, but also their children and grandchildren, would not rebel. For this, executions of hostages and gas attacks against those who sought refuge in the forests were needed. And the goal was achieved. A few years later, forced collectivization, the "year of the great turning point" that finished off the NEP, passed much more calmly, without uprisings on the Antonov scale, although, perhaps, even with even greater casualties. However, how many people were exterminated by the fighters of the Tambov army under the leadership of the "red Napoleon", we are unlikely to ever know. It must have been in the thousands, if

After the suppression of the Tambov uprising, Tukhachevsky again commanded the Western Front. He remained in this post until March 1924, with a short break, when, due to a conflict with the Revolutionary Military Council of the front, he was recalled to Moscow to lead the Military Academy. On April 24, Mikhail Nikolaevich went on a promotion - he became an assistant to the chief of staff of the Red Army (then head of the headquarters was M.V. Frunze, who knew him well on the Eastern Front). The German General Karl Shpalke, who repeatedly met with Tukhachevsky, assessed his rapid career under the Bolsheviks as follows:

“He, among other talents, brought with him an extraordinary ability to adapt, which allowed him to bypass the innumerable reefs in the maelstrom of the revolution, to reach an initially impregnable post.” But it cannot be denied that Tukhachevsky was appointed to higher positions not by acquaintance, but because of his organizational, strong-willed and military qualities. The tragedy for Mikhail Nikolayevich was that in the implementation of his plans for the reorganization of the Red Army, he could more or less firmly rely only on a narrow stratum of former tsarist officers, who, like him, quite early, tied their fate with the Communist **Party**. During Tukhachevsky's stay at the academy, a discussion began to unfold

about what strategy should be followed in the event of a war: offensive or defensive, "strategy of crushing" or "strategy of attrition"? An ardent supporter of the latter was one of the professors of the academy, former Major General A.A. Svechin, an authoritative military theorist, who also headed the commission on the use of the experience of the First World War. Tukhachevsky, on the contrary, advocated the dominance of an offensive maneuvering strategy, which involved the defeat of the enemy with several powerful blows. As a result of a conflict with the new chief, Svechin soon left the academy, which did not prevent him from releasing the capital work "Strategy" in 1923, where the former general defended his views and, in particular, the primacy of strategic defense as the basis for the subsequent transition to the offensive against the exhausted and weakened enemy. In 1924, in the foreword of the anthology he compiled of the works of military classics, mostly supporters of "starvation", Svechin warned: "War is long months of labor, deprivation and sacrifice; the troops evenly pull their straps, but they must understand that there are times when it is necessary to harvest the harvest that is the fruit of all these efforts. One day, the peasant says in such cases, feeds for a year. Tactics plows and sows, harvesting is a matter of strategy. If you forget about the harvest, then you shouldn't even be engaged in farming ... "Later, in 1927, Svechin emphasized that "for the success of the defense, you need to be able to lose territory." The idea is absolutely sound. This is exactly what the Poles did in 1920 and

as a result, they created a "miracle on the Vistula". However, Tukhachevsky was for the war mainly on foreign territory, and better - with the least losses, and for this he proposed to properly train soldiers and commanders and saturate the army with weapons and equipment. He looked at the future war as a civil war, only now on a global scale. He hoped that the proletariat of Western Europe would help the fraternal Red Army and that it would be possible to reap a bountiful harvest very soon. True, it turned out differently in World War II, but in the early 1920s, hopes for a world revolution had not yet faded. The reappointment of Tukhachevsky to the Western Front was largely due to the calculation that a revolution was about to break out in Germany (which the Bolshevik leaders seriously expected in 1922-1923). Tukhachevsky, like Frunze and Voroshilov,

believed that the Red Army should strive to forestall potential opponents and be the first to go on the offensive. Back in 1921, in his article "Training of the Troops," he wrote: "The workers and peasants must know that the Soviet government will make every effort and means to avoid new wars, but they must be aware that the class enemies of Soviet Russia are only waiting for an opportunity to with the least loss for themselves, pounce on it and strangle the hated workers' state. And if so, then military training should not be forgotten behind peaceful labor. If so, then every worker of Soviet Russia must be prepared not to expect a capitalist attack when war is declared on us, but, on the contrary, to pounce on the enemies who are ready to attack, overthrow them and bring the banner of socialist war onto bourgeois territory. Tukhachevsky urged to prepare for such a war "both spiritually, technically and physically." He regulated this preparation in the following theses: "on the aims of the war, on the inevitability of revolutionary explosions in the bourgeois states that have declared war on us (Tukhachevsky implied that the bourgeoisie had actually already declared war on the Soviet Republic since the victory of the October Revolution. - **B.S.**), about the combination of socialist offensives with these explosions, about the atrophy of national feelings and about the development of class consciousness and solidarity ... "

Tukhachevsky considered the most suitable type of defense to be passive defense, which "wins time and saves strength as much as possible." The idea of an active, or, in later terminology, "elastic defense", he rejected from the threshold, arguing: "... Passive defense is an element of a bold decision, and an active one is an element of a timid decision," although he himself became a victim on the Vistula of an active, i.e. connected with a deliberate retreat and counterattack on the attackers, defense by the enemy. The commander of the Western Front believed that, since "one who defends when breaking through his front is much more shocked and confused than the one who has broken through," then "the counterattacking reserves are morally in a worse position than the one who has broken through." In addition, Tukhachevsky emphasized, "after all, the one who breaks through is stronger than the defender ... and in numerical terms, the counterattack loses." From this he concluded: "... You should not count on the strength of deep reserves. It is better to strengthen the battle line in every possible way ... Active actions of deep reserves will not bring any benefit ... It is better for them to limit themselves to occupying a new fortified zone in the rear, plugging the hole that

The Red Army was preparing for an offensive, for a "preemptive strike." Therefore, Tukhachevsky preferred not to remember whose morale on the Vistula turned out to be stronger: the counterattack Polish group or the weak Soviet troops opposing it. And as before, he neglected questions of defense, hoping that in a future war it would not be necessary to defend for a long time, and even more so to defend along the entire front. Frunze, Voroshilov, and many other military leaders thought the same way. The line of Trotsky and Svechin on the primacy of strategic defense for the Red Army was defamed and consigned to oblivion.

The practice of the Great Patriotic War proved that Tukhachevsky was wrong. For more than a year, the Red Army had to defend itself along the entire front. And later, when the strategic initiative passed to it, individual armies and even army groups had to fight heavy defensive battles, including in the victorious 45th. The experience of World War II and a number of subsequent military conflicts also confirmed the effectiveness of active defense based on counterattacks in pre-selected areas against an enemy that has broken through.

In November 1925, Tukhachevsky became Chief of Staff of the Red Army. Although this appointment followed after the death of Frunze during an operation for a stomach ulcer, the issue of this appointment was resolved in principle even during his lifetime. Mikhail Vasilievich became close friends with Tukhachevsky back in 1919 on the Eastern Front. In his new post, Mikhail Nikolayevich had to prepare the Red Army for a future war.

In the work *Issues of Modern Strategy*, published in 1926, Mikhail Nikolayevich called the task of "militaryization" of the country the most important task, believing that central planning allows the USSR to "squeeze out a larger percentage of military products" than in capitalist countries, and to ensure that the economy does not was destroyed by the need to transition to a military footing. In full accordance with the line of Stalin and the majority of the Politburo, he advocated the militarization of the country in peacetime and the subordination of the entire economy to the needs of the country's defense, the practical mobilization of industry even before the outbreak of hostilities. At

the same time, in *Questions of Modern Strategy*, Tukhachevsky, still believing that the Red Army in a future war would mainly have to attack, and not defend, expressed very sound thoughts. "It must be borne in mind," he warned, "that in modern conditions of warfare, it is very often not possible to achieve the destruction of the enemy in one operation. The enemy often slips away from the blow. Therefore, operations have to be carried out one after another in order to finish off the enemy at least at the last line of his resistance. And this feature is located where the areas that feed the war begin. This led to the conclusion: "We must reckon with the fact that we are facing difficult, long wars ..." This forecast was fully confirmed during the Second World War, when the resistance of the Wehrmacht ceased only after the Allied troops occupied almost the entire territory of Germany, including the capital. And one more conclusion of Tukhanevsky is quite relevant today: "... The art of destroying the enemy's armed forces is the main condition for the economical and successful conduct of war, and in this art, as in all the art of strategy, we must constantly improve." And in the article of 1927, "The Tasks of Combined Arms Training," the Chief of Staff of the Red Army formulated: "... The main tactical principle is

is to act according to the situation. He was a supporter of the fact that the independence necessary for a commander was granted both in exercises and in real combat conditions.

Tukhachevsky remained in the post of Chief of Staff of the Red Army until May 1928. The reason for his departure from this post was the constant conflicts with Voroshilov. For example, on April 5, 1928, Tukhachevsky wrote to the people's commissar: "... I consider it necessary to report two main points that make the work of the Red Army Headquarters completely abnormal ... First of all, in both current and planned work, such a situation is created that it can often seem that you, as people's commissar, you work on your own, and the Headquarters of the Red Army on its own, which is completely unnatural, since in essence the Headquarters should be a working apparatus in your hands to unite all parties and work to prepare for the war. If it is not such an apparatus, then it means that things are not in order. A few days later, on April 16, Voroshilov received another letter, or rather, a denunciation of Tukhachevsky signed by Budyonny, Yegorov and Dybenko, where the Chief of Staff of the Red Army was accused of having allegedly removed himself from the management of the work of the Headquarters and did not correspond to his position. In the end, Mikhail Nikolaevich realized that all his initiatives to rearm the troops and reorganize the military authorities were being blocked by the people's commissar, and filed a report on his dismissal. He was appointed commander of the Leningrad Military District.

In Leningrad, Tukhachevsky did not calm down and continued to build large-scale plans for transformation. On January 11, 1930, he submitted a report on the reorganization of the Red Army to People's Commissar Voroshilov, where he argued: "The successes of our socialist construction ... put before us in full growth the task of reconstructing the Armed Forces based on taking into account all the latest technological factors and the possibility of mass military-technical production, as well as the shifts that have taken place in the countryside (so delicately Mikhail Nikolaevich called the forced collectivization of the peasantry, which led to mass starvation. - **B.S.**) ... The reconstructed army will also call for new forms of operational art. Tukhachevsky proposed to increase the size of the army, as well as the number

artillery, aviation and tanks. This was supposed to guarantee the victory of the USSR in a future world war.

Voroshilov handed over the letter to Stalin on March 5, 1930, with the following comment: "... I am sending a copy of Tukhachevsky's letter for review (that's right, even without the sacramental "comrade" mandatory in official documents when mentioning party members; this alone speaks enough about the attitude of the People's Commissar to Tukhachevsky. - **B.S.) and** a certificate from the headquarters on this matter.

Tukhachevsky wants to be original and ... "radical". It is bad that in the Red Army there is a breed of people who take this "radicalism" at face value. I beg you to read both documents and tell me your opinion." Stalin agreed with Voroshilov and wrote to him on March 23: "... I think that Comrade Tukhachevsky's "plan" is the result of a fashionable passion for "leftist" phrases, the result of a passion for paper, clerical maximalism. That is why the analysis is replaced in it by the "game of figures", and the Marxist perspective of the growth of the Red Army is a fantasy. To "implement" such a "plan" would surely ruin both the country's economy and the army. It would be worse than any counter-revolution... Yours, I. Stalin." The leader still did not suspect the commander of the Leningrad district of counterrevolution and still called him "comrade." This word was worth a lot in the USSR: "enemy of the people", as if in a mockery of civil society, immediately turned into a "citizen". Having received such a favorable answer from Stalin, Voroshilov

prepared a draft letter to Tukhachevsky, mocking in tone and meager in content, since cautious Kliment Efremovich did not dare to add anything of his own to Stalin's opinion: "... I am sending you his (i.e. Stalin) assessment of your "plan". It is not very flattering ... but, in my deep conviction, it is absolutely correct and deserved by you. I fully agree with the opinion of Comrade Stalin that the adoption and implementation of your program would be worse than any counter-revolution, because it would inevitably lead to the complete liquidation of socialist construction and its replacement by some kind of system, in any case hostile to the proletariat. red militarism. However, Voroshilov preferred not to send the letter personally to the addressee, but announced it at an expanded meeting of the Revolutionary Military Council. This outraged Tukhachevsky. December 30, 1931 he

sent a message to Stalin: "... The wording of your letter, announced by Comrade. Voroshilov at an enlarged meeting of the Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR, completely excludes for me the possibility of bringing up for a wide discussion a number of issues related to the problems of developing our defense capability; for example, I was expelled as the head of strategy from the Military Academy of the Red Army, where I taught this subject for six years. In general, my position in these matters has become extremely false. Meanwhile, I assert as resolutely as before that the Headquarters of the Red Army

unprincipledly distorted the proposals of my note ... "Stalin played some complicated game with Mikhail Nikolayevich. On June 31, Tukhachevsky was returned to Moscow and appointed head of armaments of the Red Army. At the end of 1931, Tukhachevsky sent a letter to Voroshilov proposing to introduce tank units into rifle and cavalry divisions. This proposal was accepted. And in May 1932, Stalin finally sent Tukhachevsky a letter in which he admitted that he had reacted too harshly and unfairly to Tukhachevsky's original note and was now ready to admit that he was right and apologize, albeit belatedly, for the mistake made against Tukhachevsky. Iosif Vissarionovich, although with reservations, repented: "In my letter addressed to Comrade Voroshilov, as you know, I basically joined the conclusions of our headquarters and spoke sharply negatively about your "note", recognizing it as the fruit of "clerical maximalism", the result of "games in numbers", etc. That was the case two years ago. Now, two years later, when some obscure questions have become clearer to me, I must admit that my assessment was too harsh, and the conclusions of my letter were not correct in everything ... It seems to me that my letter addressed to Comrade Voroshilov was not would have been so sharp in tone and it would have been free from some incorrect conclusions about you, if I had then transferred the dispute to this new base. But I didn't, because obviously the problem wasn't clear enough for me yet. Do not scold me for undertaking to correct the shortcomings of my letter with some delay. With communist greetings. I. Stalin. If you wish, you can see in these words a hint that he, Stalin, was misled about Tukhachevsky's proposals by Voroshilov and Shaposhnikov, who then took the post of Chief of Staff of the Red Army, and that then, two years ago, Mikhail was right

Nikolaevich was not as obvious as it is now, when the first successes of accelerated industrialization have become apparent. Most importantly, Stalin really wanted to use Tukhachevsky's military talent and organizational skills to prepare the Red Army for a future war and that the new deputy people's commissar of defense would work not out of fear, but out of conscience. That is why he brought a written apology, admitted, albeit partially, that he was wrong. Tukhachevsky, of course, did not know that Iosif Vissarionovich

did not forgive anyone for such humiliations, and in the long term the fate of those who received an apology from the Secretary General was a foregone conclusion. It was unbearable for Stalin to realize that someone turned out to be smarter and more far-sighted than him in those areas that the Secretary General considered his main strong points: politics, economics, military affairs. He spoke about this in 1936 in Paris to the Menshevik F.I. Stalin's former friend Bukharin, who already foresaw imminent death, was given to Danu: "Stalin is even unhappy because he cannot convince everyone, and even himself, that he is greater than everyone else, and this is his misfortune, perhaps the most human trait in him, perhaps the only human trait in him, but not human, but something diabolical, is that for this very "misfortune" he cannot but take revenge on people, all people, and especially those who are somehow higher, better than him ... If someone speaks better than him, he is doomed, he will no longer leave him alive, for this person is an eternal reminder to him that he is not the first, not the best; if someone writes better, his business is bad ... This is a small, vicious person, not a man, but the devil. Tukhachevsky knew military affairs better than Stalin and knew how to lead troops. To shoot it turned out

enough.

As head of armaments and deputy people's commissar, Tukhachevsky began practical activities to reorganize and re-equip the Red Army. The basic principles of the reform program were outlined by him in the manuscript "New Questions of War", begun in Leningrad in the spring of 1931. In the preface, Mikhail Nikolaevich wrote: "This book is the first part of the planned work and considers the armed forces and their use." In the second and third parts, which were never written, Tukhachevsky intended to analyze the military potential of the USSR and possible "imperialist coalitions" and the likely course of the struggle.

against these coalitions. He admitted: "The short time that a practically busy person has to work on theoretical issues, with a big stretch, allows him to dwell on individual places for a long time. Life moves ahead, and the beginning of the book lags behind the end ... It is quite possible that many will think that I am running too ahead in this book. But nevertheless it will be a kind of optical illusion. It is not easy for a person to get rid of habitual ideas, but theoretical work, based on technical development and socialist construction, stubbornly puts forward new forms, and I have absolutely no doubt that in two years this book will largely become outdated, and what now seems strange, will be habitual, ordinary. What did Tukhachevsky manage to foresee? How accurate was his prediction? First of all, he attributed a decisive role in a

future war to tanks and aviation. In such a general form, perhaps, the vast majority of military theoreticians who worked in the 1930s would have stood in solidarity with him. However, what is very important, Tukhachevsky was able to correctly predict many specific features of the use of these new formidable types of weapons. For example, New Questions of War quite rightly emphasized the need to strive for "simplicity in the production of aircraft" - a trend that was especially pronounced during the Second World War and, perhaps, most clearly in the USSR, where unskilled workers from women and teenagers. Tukhachevsky, following the well-known British military theorist B. Lidzel Hart, argued that "the bulk of tanks will be built on the country's automobile and tractor base" and therefore "in a future war, active tanks will be measured not in thousands, as it was in 1918, but tens of thousands." I note that by June 22, 1941, the Red Army had more than 23 thousand tanks.

In February 1934, Tukhachevsky, together with the commander of the Belarusian Military District, Uborevich, wrote a letter to Voroshilov, where they argued that the air force would play a decisive role in a future war: "...Modern aviation can disrupt rail transportation for a long time, destroy ammunition depots, disrupt mobilization and the concentration of troops ...

The side that will not be ready to defeat enemy air bases, to disorganize its railway transport by systematic air attacks, to disrupt its mobilization and concentration by numerous airborne assault forces, to destroy its fuel and ammunition depots, to defeat enemy garrisons and echelons with rapid actions of mechanized units supported by cavalry and infantry in vehicles - she herself runs the risk of being defeated. Based on this, the authors of the Soviet

letters suggested, taking into account the possibilities aviation industry, to have in the Red Army by 1935 up to 15 thousand combat aircraft. But soon this figure, which seemed fantastic then, was blocked. Only in the period from January 1, 1939 to June 22, 1941, the Red Army received 17,745 combat aircraft, of which 3,719 were new types, not inferior in basic parameters to the best Luftwaffe vehicles. They just didn't know how to fly these planes. On the eve of the Great Patriotic War, in the first three months of 1941, the pilots of the Baltic Military District managed to fly an average of 15.5 hours, the Western one - 9, and the Kiev one - in general 4 hours. On aircraft of new designs, many pilots did not have time to take to the air. It is not surprising that, having only 1860 combat aircraft on the Eastern Front by the beginning of the war, the Germans in less than a month without much difficulty destroyed almost all the aviation of the Soviet border districts. Tukhachevsky's plans for the quantitative growth of aviation and the improvement of the quality of combat aircraft were put into practice with great abundance, but it turned out to be of little use, because the entire effect of tens of thousands of "steel birds" (more precisely, aluminum and wooden ones) was nullified by the lack of trained crews. Most likely, it was the case in excess when the number of aircraft fleet increased without taking into account the presence of pilots. Tukhachevsky, of course, was not to blame here, he was just drawing attention to the need to have trained cadres of pilots, tankers, and representatives of other military specialties. Mikhail Nikolayevich even drew attention to the fact that "the quality level of personnel in capitalist countries with a long cultural history will be higher than our level and a simplified comparison with numbers alone is not quite enough." However, this warning was forgotten, and Tukhachevsky himself is not inclined to

was to put this circumstance at the forefront when developing plans for a future war, because he believed that the Red Army would have to attack, not defend. In New

Questions of War, Tukhachevsky optimistically proclaimed: "If the French Revolution created the prerequisites for the emergence of mass armies of hundreds of thousands of fighters, then the socialist reconstruction of our country, the revolution carried out in technology and production, creates the prerequisites for such a massive technical reconstruction of the army, which world haven't taken it out yet." At the same time, in contrast to Fuller and Liddell Garth, he believed that under the new conditions, a multimillion-strong army should not at all be replaced by a small, well-trained regular army: "Lampings, deep breakthroughs, conducting deep battles - not only do not exclude the need for a multimillion-strong infantry and artillery army, but, on the contrary, offers it desirable. This army will be more and more motorized and mechanized, and thereby move into a higher and higher class of combat capability. The ratio between old and new forms of organization will depend on how long the war breaks out. But this process of development will go even faster during the war itself. In this process, Tukhachevsky attached paramount importance to "the quality of a fighter", arguing that "a modern fighter must be highly cultured, must have the ability to expediently and productively use advanced technology." Mikhail Nikolaevich seemed to abstract from the specific conditions of Soviet reality in the 1930s, when the bulk of them had long been accustomed to living and working according to a template, sat on cards (until the end of 1934) and was afraid to say an extra word, frightened by several waves of terror (he still did not know that the main wave was ahead and would not pass him).

Tukhachevsky did not take into account what kind of personnel the army would receive in the event of war. After all, the same peasants and recent workers from the peasantry, who make up the majority in the Armed Forces, were thoroughly demoralized by rapid and forcible collectivization, intimidated by terror. The liquidation of illiteracy in the USSR gave the overwhelming majority only a formal education, but by no means the ability to adequately use the acquired knowledge. In these

under conditions, a less numerous, but well-trained for a number of years, cadre army could be more useful to the Soviet Union than the many millions of yesterday's armed workers and peasants. But neither the military nor the political leaders of the country did not realize this.

In 1932, Tukhachevsky conducted an experimental exercise of the Baltic Fleet, as a result of which he made a very decisive conclusion that powerful battleships, which had previously been considered the main striking force of the fleet, had outlived their time. "The use of new technical means of sea and air naval combat," Mikhail Nikolayevich wrote in a report to the People's Commissar, "raises the question of combating the battle fleet in a completely new way, especially in conditions of relative proximity to the coast. The speed of a battleship and the power of its artillery armament can be reduced, and sometimes almost nullified, by the use of high-altitude and low-altitude torpe-throwing, high-altitude laying of barrage mines, attacks by radio-controlled missiles and torpedo boats, smoke-filled artillery observation and control on ships by dropping small smoke bombs and powerful aviation bombing with the use in all cases of a wide setting of smoke screens by aviation. Indeed, in World War II, the role of battleships faded away very quickly, as they turned out to be very vulnerable to aircraft and submarines. So, during the defeat at Pearl Harbor in December of the 41st, all American battleships were destroyed or disabled. However, the Americans managed to keep their aircraft carriers intact, and thanks to this, six months later, the Japanese fleet was defeated by them in a battle near Midway Atoll. Unfortunately, in the Soviet Union in the 30s they again began to get involved in the construction of battleships and heavy cruisers. The fact that Stalin himself favored these ships also played a role. As a result, by the beginning of the Second

World War, the Red Fleet turned out to be redundant to fight the very limited forces that the German fleet could allocate against it. Nevertheless, in both the Baltic and the Black Sea, Soviet naval forces suffered heavy losses from German aircraft and submarines. And then it turned out that the Soviet Navy was in dire need of boats, self-propelled barges, patrol and escort ships, landing and artillery ships of the coastal

the range needed to protect convoys and land troops on the coast occupied by the enemy. The Germans, who had such vessels on the Black Sea, gained an advantage over the much more numerous but cumbersome Soviet fleet. After the end of the war, the USSR launched a full-scale naval arms race, first with battleships, then with nuclear submarines, missile cruisers and aircraft carriers, but it never caught up with the fleet of the main potential enemy, the United States. And today in Russia the fleet is too large for possible local conflicts with neighbors, but is obviously doomed in a full-scale conflict **with the same** NATO. Therefore, new calls for the strengthening of the Russian fleet are nothing more than, in the words of Tukhachevsky, "maritime patriotism of maritime workers", incommensurable with the real capabilities of the country. Tukhachevsky saw very early the prospect of developing rocket

weapons. Back in November 1932, he achieved the start of work on the design of liquid-fuel rocket engines, and in September 1933 he achieved the creation of the Jet Research Institute, which was engaged in the development of rocket weapons in the USSR. Tukhachevsky also appreciated the importance of radars. In early 1933, he instructed the Air Defense Directorate to determine which institutes and design bureaus could use electromagnetic waves to detect aircraft. Outwardly, Tukhachevsky's career developed to do using quite smoothly. On February 21, 1933, he was

awarded the Order of Lenin "for exceptional personal services to the revolution in organizing the defense of the USSR on the external and internal fronts during the Civil War and subsequent organizational measures to strengthen the power of the Red Army." In the same year, they entrusted to host a military parade on Red Square on November 7th. In 1934, at the 17th Party Congress, Mikhail Nikolayevich was elected a candidate member of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks. On November 20, 1935, Tukhachevsky, together with Voroshilov, Budyonny, Egorov and Blucher, was awarded the highest military rank of Marshal of the Soviet Union, and less than a year later, on April 9, 1936, he became the first deputy people's commissar of defense and head of the Combat Training Department of the Red Army. However, behind the rapid ascent of the youngest "red marshal" to the heights of military power, up to

the second most important post in the hierarchy of the People's Commissariat of Defense, the struggle of groups was hiding. Voroshilov and the commanders of the First Cavalry supporting him opposed Tukhachevsky, around whom the communists from among the former officers were grouped, as well as some military leaders who did not have officer ranks in the tsarist army, but were in tense relations with Voroshilov and other "cavalrymen". Kliment

Efremovich himself was very suspicious of the innovations of his young deputy. In particular, the People's Commissar at the Plenum of the Revolutionary Military Council criticized the theory of deep combat advocated by Tukhachevsky. In this regard, on November 20, 1933, Mikhail Nikolayevich wrote to Voroshilov with a letter, where he noted: "... After your speech at the Plenum of the Revolutionary Military Council, many had the impression that, despite the new weapons in the army, tactics should remain old ... Therefore, I decided to write this letter that after the Plenum, fermentation began in the minds of the commanders. There is talk of abandoning new forms of tactics, of their development, and since ... this is completely at odds with what you have repeatedly expressed, I decided to inform you of the ongoing confusion ... "There really was confusion, but not only among the commanders of the middle link, but also among the highest military leaders. Sooner or later, an open clash in the leadership of the People's Commissariat of Defense became inevitable

Abroad, Tukhachevsky in the 30s was considered the most outstanding of all the leaders of the Red Army. Former colonel of the tsarist service A.A. Zaitsev in 1934 wrote in the Paris "Russian invalid": "Being a man of culture and quite literate from a military point of view, Tukhachevsky is undoubtedly the largest military specialist among those holding senior positions in the Red Army." In the USSR, such praises from the white emigration Voroshilov and his entourage were perceived very warily. But in fact, not only during the life of Mikhail Nikolaevich, but even after his untimely death, a greater organizer and theorist did not appear in the Red and the Soviet Army that inherited it. The marshal did not have time to create the army he dreamed about. He did not win a single battle on a truly global scale,

defeating only the relatively weak troops of Kolchak and Denikin. So

the attack on Warsaw could have been a battle, but, as we remember, it ended very badly for the armies of the Western Front. Tukhachevsky did not make any original contribution to military theory. He quickly responded to new trends in this area, but in general followed in the footsteps of the British - Liddell Garth and Fuller. In the preface to the latter's book *The Reformation of War*, written in 1930, Tukhachevsky stressed the importance of Fuller's demands for increased attention to military equipment and the latest types of weapons, but reproached the British general for underestimating mass armies. And at the same time, he managed to speak commendably about the process of the Industrial Party, embroidered with white thread, and about the "liquidation of the kulak as a class." He had no political disagreements with the communists, with Stalin ... If Tukhachevsky had not been executed, and he had met the 41st year at the head of the Red Army, the result would have been approximately the same as in reality. After all, the defeats of the first months of the Great Patriotic War were determined by the general flaws of the Soviet system, which Tukhachevsky, with all his desire, could not eliminate. Another thing, then he would have a chance to play the role in the war that Marshal G.K. actually played. Zhukov (unless, of course, they made him a "scapegoat" as the commander of the Western Front, General D.G. Pavlov).

With the advent of Hitler to power in Germany, communications between the Reichswehr and the Red Army were interrupted. The official remilitarization of the Third Reich, which began in 1935, further worsened Soviet-German relations. The newly created Wehrmacht began to be seen as the main potential enemy. And Tukhachevsky, with the approval from above, wrote the article "Hitler's Military Plans", where he emphasized: "... The frantic, frantic policy of German National Socialism is pushing the world into a new war. But in this furious militaristic policy, National Socialism comes up against the firm peace policy of the Soviet Union. This policy of peace is supported by tens of millions of proletarians and working people of all countries. But if, in spite of everything, the capitalists and their servants kindle the flames of war and risk anti-Soviet intervention, then our Red Army and our entire socialist industrial country will turn any invading army into an army of destruction with iron blows, and woe to those who themselves violated their borders. No strength

capable of defeating our socialist collective-farm country, a country with its gigantic human and industrial resources, with its great communist party and its great leader Comrade Stalin.

Towards the end of his life, Tukhachevsky became increasingly aware that the actual level of training of the Soviet troops did not meet the needs of a future war. In his notes on the large maneuvers of the Moscow Military District, which took place in September 1936, he stated with regret that neither the training of fighters and commanders, nor the interaction of troops, nor the work of headquarters are at the proper level: "The mechanized corps broke through the enemy's defensive lines from the front without support art. The losses must have been huge... The actions of the mechanized corps were sluggish, the control was poor... The actions of the mechanized corps were not supported by aviation... The aviation was used... not purposefully enough... Communications were not working well... The landing of airborne troops should have been provided by fighters... Paratroopers are jumping without weapons. This must

be changed ... The work of the headquarters, in particular intelligence, is very weak in all parts ... "Tukhachevsky insisted: we must" teach people only what is required in the war "(General N.I. Koritsky cites these words of Mikhail Nikolayevich in his memoirs). But, unfortunately, this principle could not be fully implemented even when Tukhachevsky was the first deputy people's commissar of defense, responsible for the combat training of the troops. After his removal and execution, the need to teach the Red Army in conditions close to combat was forgotten for a long time. Some sobering up came only after the failure in the Finnish war. The new People's Commissar of Defense S.K. Timoshenko put forward a slogan that almost word for word coincides with Tukhachevsky's thought: "Teach the troops only what is needed in the war, and only as it is done in the war." Nevertheless, nothing radically changed in the matter of combat training until the beginning of the Great Patriotic War failed. Although the inspection conducted in the spring of 1941 concluded that there was a significant increase in the combat skills of the personnel, it turned out to be true only on paper. However, Stalin, Timoshenko and the then Chief of the General Staff G.K. On the eve of June 22, Zhukov was sure that the Red Army was quite ready for a large-scale clash with the Wehrma

"We foresaw that the war with Germany could be difficult and lengthy, but at the same time we believed that our country already had everything necessary for a long war and struggle until complete victory. Then we did not think that our armed forces would have to enter the war so unsuccessfully, suffer a heavy defeat in the very first battles and be forced to retreat into the interior of the country. It is unlikely that Tukhachevsky thought in the same way, who, like Voroshilov, Timoshenko, Zhukov and almost all other military leaders, firmly believed that in a future war the Red Army would be the attacking side, and if it had to defend it, then not for long and only on secondary directions. Although, of course, Mikhail Nikolaevich was much more critical than Georgy Konstantinovich assessed the state of the Soviet armed forces. Stalin needed an absolutely obedient

army of thoughtless performers, which could be abandoned at any moment both to suppress unrest within the country and to carry out a new campaign to the West to ensure the triumph of the "world revolution". As the big war approached, the dictator became more and more afraid of Tukhachevsky: under the command of the former second lieutenant of the guards, there would be huge forces, and would he want to move them to Moscow instead of Warsaw and Berlin?

All Tukhachevsky's ideas about increasing the combat effectiveness of the Red Army under the conditions of a totalitarian communist regime, which did not need independent-minded people, including the military, could not be fully implemented. Therefore, the Red Army could only win with very large bloodshed and was inferior to the main potential enemy, the Wehrmacht, in terms of the level of combat training.

In April 1936, a year before his death, Tukhachevsky developed and conducted a large operational-strategic staff game, where a possible scenario for a war between the USSR and Germany was worked out. We know about the course of this game only from the testimony at the investigation in the case of the "military-fascist conspiracy", and from the rather meager memories of its participants - Colonel G.S. Isserson, who compiled the assignment for the game, and Lieutenant General A.I. Todorsky, who during the game commanded one of the formations on the German side, all of whose troops were commanded by Tukhachevsky. troops

an ally of Germany - Poland, was led by the then commander of the Kyiv military district I.E. Yakir, and the Soviet Western Front was headed by the commander of the Belarussian Military District I.P. Uborevich. According to the memoirs of Isserson and Todorsky, the General Staff of the Red Army believed that Germany could at that moment mobilize up to 100 divisions, of which half would be thrown to the front north of Polesie to march on Moscow, where they would be helped by another 30 Polish divisions. The game turned into a frontal clash in which the Red Army, with about 100 divisions, eventually won.

In his own testimony at the investigation dated June 1, 1937, Tukhachevsky outlined the results of the game as follows: "This game gave us the opportunity to think over operational capabilities and weigh the chances of victory for both sides, both in general and in individual areas, for individual participants in the conspiracy (i.e. for I.P. Uborevich and I.E. Yakir, who at that time commanded, respectively, the Belorussian and Kiev military districts, which, with the outbreak of the war, were to turn into the Belorussian and Ukrainian fronts. - B.S.) . As a result of this game, preliminary assumptions were confirmed that the forces (number of divisions) put up by the Red Army for mobilization were insufficient to fulfill the tasks assigned to it on the western borders. Assuming the assumption that the main German forces would be thrown into the Ukrainian direction, I came to the conclusion that if our operational plan was not amended, then first the Ukrainian and then the Belorussian fronts were threatened with a very possible defeat ... I gave the task to Yakir and Uborevich for a thorough elaboration of an operational plan in Ukraine and Belarus..."

A certain artificiality of the military-political introductory for the game is striking. In 1936, there was no need to talk about the German-Polish alliance, since Hitler made serious territorial claims against Poland - the lands of the German Empire, which had gone to Warsaw under the Versailles Peace Treaty. In addition, the Fuhrer questioned the very existence of an independent Polish state. The Kremlin could not but know this, and Tukhachevsky could not but know. It seems that a rather ridiculous construction of joint actions of the Wehrmacht and the Polish army

he needed in order to disguise the true aggressive Soviet goals in front of the ordinary participants in the game. Most likely, Stalin intended to first defeat and occupy Poland, in alliance with Germany or alone, and then, choosing the right moment (best of all, when Germany would be shackled by the war in the West), fall upon the Wehrmacht with all the might of the Red Army. And in 1935 it numbered 940 thousand people, and by the beginning of 1938 - already 1513 thousand, significantly surpassing the Wehrmacht in terms of numbers and weapons. At the beginning of 1936, the Soviet armed forces already had 4 mechanized corps, 6 separate mechanized brigades and 6 tank regiments, while in Germany, which had just abandoned the military restrictions of the Versailles Treaty, tank and mechanized formations were just beginning to form. Probably, during the game of 1936, the mythical Polish divisions on the German side were only supposed to demonstrate the aggressiveness of Germany, as if they were going to attack the USSR together with Poland. And replace the real German divisions, the number of which was deliberately underestimated. After all, Tukhachevsky quite rightly believed that Germany was capable of deploying about 200 divisions in the future, so that on the front north of Polesie, where Army Groups North and Center were advancing in the 41st, the Wehrmacht would be able to concentrate at least 80 divisions. According to the game, it turned out that way, only 30 German divisions were replaced by Polish ones. I note that Tukhachevsky's forecast turned out to be accurate - on the eve of the attack on the USSR, Hitler had a little more than 200 divisions. It is also interesting that, although according to the terms of the game, the Soviet Union was attacked by Germany and Poland, the factor of surprise was not taken into account in any way, and the deployment of the Red Army proceeded unhindered, without any opposition from the Poles and Germans. In addition, the Wehrmacht used only half of its forces against the USSR, keeping the rest in the West, as if there had already been a war with England, France, and perhaps also with Czechoslovakia, with which the Soviet Union had an agreement on mutual assistance. All this leads to the following idea: Tukhachevsky believed that the Red Army would be the first to start a war with Germany, and only after Hitler got involved in a war **with** the Western powers.

The fall of Tukhachevsky began in the second half of April on the 37th. Mikhail Nikolaevich and his wife were going to London for the coronation of King George VI. And suddenly the trip is cancelled. People's Commissar of Internal Affairs N.I. On April 21, 1937, Yezhov sent a special message to Stalin, Molotov and Voroshilov: "Today we have received data from a foreign source that deserves full confidence that during Comrade's trip. Tukhachevsky to the coronation celebrations in London, on the instructions of the German intelligence agencies, it is planned to commit a terrorist act. To prepare a terrorist act, a group of 4 people (3 Germans and 1 Pole) was created. The source does not rule out that the terrorist act is being prepared with the intention of causing an international complication. In view of the fact that we are deprived of the opportunity to provide security for Comrade. Tukhachevsky, guaranteeing his complete safety, I consider it expedient for Comrade. Tukhachevsky to London to cancel. Please discuss." On this paper, Stalin wrote: "To the members of the Politburo. Sad as it may seem, we have to agree with Comrade Yezhov's proposal. Comrade Voroshilov should be invited to present another candidate."

The Politburo meekly agreed with the leader and the next day decided to cancel Tukhachevsky's trip. Instead, the flagship of the fleet of the 1st rank V.M. went to London. Orlov, head of the naval forces of the Red Army and deputy people's commissar of defense (he was shot a year later than Tukhachevsky, on July 28, 1938). On April 23, Mikhail Nikolayevich was acquainted **with** the text of the special message, Stalin's resolution and the decision of the Politburo. What must he have thought? Of course, Tukhachevsky's publications with sharp criticism of the remilitarization of Germany were widely known and earned him hatred in Berlin. So, in principle, the Germans could try to destroy Tukhachevsky. However, the proviso in Yezhov's note that a terrorist attack might be being prepared to provoke international complications changed the essence of the matter. In this case, the assassins would be practically indifferent which of Voroshilov's deputies to kill - Tukhachevsky or Orlov. The NKVD in the same way could not guarantee one hundred percent security to the head of the naval forces, but for some reason they risked sending him to foggy Albion. The

first direct blow to Tukhachevsky followed on 10 May. It was a knockdown. Marshal, to use boxing terminology,

“floated”, fell into a state of “trough”. The Politburo accepted Voroshilov's proposal to release Tukhachevsky from his duties as First Deputy People's Commissar of Defense and appoint him commander of a secondary, Volga, military district. By the same decree, Yakir was transferred from the Kyiv district to the Leningrad district, and thereby he lost his place in the Politburo of the Communist Party of Ukraine (this subsequently facilitated the procedure for his arrest). Army Commander 1st Rank Shaposhnikov became the chief of the General Staff, and Marshal Egorov became the first deputy people's commissar. On May 13, Tukhachevsky obtained an appointment with Stalin. What they were talking about is unknown. But some information, as the reasons for his disgrace were explained to the marshal, is available. Kulyabko's old friend, who lived to see rehabilitation, showed the party commission that when he found out about Tukhachevsky's appointment to the Volga district, he rushed to his apartment. Marshal explained that "the reason for his transfer to Kuibyshev, as reported in the Central Committee of the party, is the fact that his friend Kuzmina and a former

guarantor turned out to be spies and were arrested." Tukhachevsky was very popular with women and, in addition to three wives, had many mistresses in his life. First wife, daughter of a Penza engineer Maria Vladimirovna Ignatieva. In 1920, she committed suicide, and the reasons for the suicide have not been clarified to this day. The second time Tukhachevsky married a year or two later, but did not live with his wife for long, only a year. She did not forgive Mikhail Nikolaevich for adultery. In this marriage, a daughter was born, who later died of diphtheria. It is known that the second wife of the future marshal was from a noble family, but so far her name is shrouded in the darkness of mystery. The third wife of Tukhachevsky was Nina Evgenievna Grinevich, also a noblewoman. They had a daughter, Svetlana. But the marshal's heart belonged to the wife of the former commissar of the Baltic Fleet, Nikolai Nikolaevich Kuzmin, whom Tukhachevsky's soldiers released from Kronstadt prison on March 21st. Yulia Ivanovna Kuzmina had a daughter, Svetlana, who was born before parting with Nikolai Nikolaevich. But there were persistent rumors that the real

father of the girl was Tukhachevsky. In the last months of Tukhachevsky's life, Lidia Shatunovskaya, the adopted daughter of an old Bolshevik, who lived in the same government office with the Tukhachevskys, met

house, after the release of the story by Yuri Trifonov, popularly known as "the house on the embankment." Finally ending up in the West, in her memoirs *Life in the Kremlin*, she gave a very sympathetic portrait of the one who was soon to become Tukhachevsky's widow and only briefly survive the executed marshal: "Nina came to me several times, we studied English together and did well met. She was a very pretty, graceful, soft woman. She was intelligent, very well educated, and came from a good, by no means proletarian, family. In her personal life, she was deeply unhappy. Everyone knew that, in addition to the official family, Tukhachevsky had another, secret family, that from his second, unofficial wife, he had a daughter of the same age as Nina's daughter (it turns out that Tukhachevsky's connection with Yulia Kuzmina, if "everyone knew"; most importantly, the NKVD was very well aware of Tukhachevsky's "official mistress" or "unofficial wife" and kept her "under the hood" - B.S.) . Both of these girls had the same name. Both were Svetlanas. Apparently, Mikhail Nikolayevich was not indifferent to this name, he wanted the daughters to have a bright fate, and both had camps ahead ... In the 37th, Svetlana Tukhachevskaya was thirteen, and Svetlana Kuzmina was eleven years old ... Nikolai Nikolayevich Kuzmin himself, arrested on May 15 1937 and accused of conspiratorial ties with

Tukhachevsky, during an interrogation that lasted from June 11 to 14, not knowing that his friend was no longer alive, he testified: "On November 1, 1930, I was in Leningrad at Tukhachevsky's apartment and dined with him. I remember this date well, because it is the birthday of my daughter, who lived with my former wife at Tukhachevsky's. Tukhachevsky is married to my ex-wife and is very attentive to my daughter. Therefore, comradely relations with him did not deteriorate even after the departure of my wife. Talking to him, I informed him about meetings with Suvarin (a member of the French Communist Party close to Trotsky. - **B.S.**) in Paris. I told him directly that Souvarine, in conversations with me, asked me to convey to him greetings from Trotsky and his personal, that he informed that the group of the most talented military men led by him was in disgrace, that it was time to move on to an active struggle, that the failure of the Stalinist politics is leading the country to destruction, that the crisis is not only

party in the USSR, but also the communist parties abroad. Tukhachevsky answered me that the methods and forms of struggle that the Trotskyists used could not give anything real, except for dispersal in prisons.

Investigators broke Nikolai Nikolaevich back on June 3, when he, unable to withstand continuous interrogations, agreed to give the necessary testimony. We can only guess whether Kuzmin, being the Soviet Consul General in Paris, really met with Souvarine and conveyed greetings from him and Trotsky to Tukhachevsky, and even in such a way that it became clear: Mikhail Nikolayevich and his associates had previously informed the former chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council about their opposition to Stalin. Or was it all invented by the investigators in order to accuse Kuzmin of covert Trotskyism?

But another confession of Nikolai Nikolaevich is almost beyond doubt. The former commissar of the Baltic Fleet quoted Tukhachevsky's words that Voroshilov and Budyonny, I.P. Belov, Shaposhnikov and Yegorov are "routiners who do not understand modern military affairs enough." Kuzmin stated: "Tukhachevsky, as he told me then, set his main task to achieve the appointment of several commanders of the troops who were guided by him as members of the Revolutionary Military Council in order to strengthen the influence of purely military men on the activities of the Revolutionary Military Council." No, of course, it was not because of women that Mikhail Nikolayevich got burned! Yulia Ivanovna was arrested and declared a spy just because she was close to Tukhachevsky. And she got off relatively lightly - only 8 years in the camps, leaving prison on May 8, 1945, on the first day of peace.

In the 20th of April, testimony was received from the arrested former head of the Special Department of the NKVD Guy and the former deputy people's commissar of internal affairs Prokofiev about the conspiracy of Tukhachevsky, Uborevich, Kork, Shaposhnikov and other military leaders with Yagoda. However, Heinrich Grigoryevich himself has not yet confirmed this. During interrogation on April 26, 1937, he insisted: "I had no personal connections in the literal sense of the word among the military. There were official acquaintances. I didn't try to recruit any of them." More accommodating was one of Yagoda's subordinates, the former deputy head of one of the departments of the NKVD Volovich. The next day he

Tukhachevsky was a member of the conspiracy of the right and had to ensure the support of the conspirators by the

army. Mikhail Nikolayevich had a chance to command the Volga Military District for a very short time. On May 14, he arrived in Kuibyshev, and on May 22 he was arrested. The 25th Marshal was brought under escort to Moscow. May 15 was followed by the arrest of the former head of the commanding staff in the People's Commissariat of Defense, one of Tukhachevsky's closest friends. Upon learning of this, Mikhail Nikolayevich was truly alarmed, fearing that he would soon follow Boris Mironovich. But he didn't have time to do anything, and he didn't know what to do.

On May 20, Yezhov sent to Stalin, Molotov, Voroshilov and Kaganovich the protocol of the interrogation of Feldman, which had been carried out the day before. In the accompanying note, the People's Commissar emphasized: "Feldman testified that he was a participant in the military-Trotskyist conspiracy and was recruited by M.N. Tukhachevsky. at the beginning of 1932. The participants in the conspiracy named by Feldman - Chief of Staff of the Transcaucasian Military District Savitsky, Deputy Commander of the Volga Military District Kuttyakov, former head of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee school Yegorov, head of the Engineering Academy Smolin, former assistant head of the engineering department Maksimov and former deputy head of the armored department Olshansky - were arrested. I ask you to discuss the issue of arresting the other participants in the conspiracy named by Feldman." It was these testimonies that served as the formal basis for the decision to arrest Tukhachevsky.

At the very first interrogations, the protocols of which were either not drawn up at all, or were not preserved, Tukhachevsky refused to admit his guilt. This is clear from his own handwritten testimony dated June 1, 1937: "I persistently and repeatedly tried to deny both my participation in the conspiracy and certain facts of my anti-Soviet activities." On May 26, Tukhachevsky declared: "I was

given face-to-face confrontations with Primakov, Putna and Feldman, who accuse me as the leader of an anti-Soviet military-Trotskyist conspiracy. Please provide me with a couple more testimonies of other participants in this conspiracy, who also accuse me. I undertake to testify frankly." And on the same day he wrote: "... I acknowledge the presence

anti-Soviet military-Trotskyist conspiracy and the fact that I was at the head of it ... The foundation of the conspiracy

dates back to 1932. The question has not yet been resolved whether Tukhachevsky was subjected to physical pressure during the investigation, that is, to put it simply, whether he was tortured and beaten. Although there are quite definite data on this matter regarding other defendants. So, a former employee of the NKVD, and later Deputy Minister of State Security, Selivanovsky, on December 10, 1962, reported to the Central Committee: "In April 1937, the cases of Putin and Primakov were transferred to Avseevich. Using brutal, brutal methods of interrogation, Avseevich forced Primakov and Pugna to testify against Tukhachevsky, Yakir and Feldman ... Avseevich's work was set as an example by other investigators by the leadership of the Special Department. Avseevich after that became the standard in working with the arrested. According to a former employee of the Special Department Budarev, Avseevich, who headed one of the departments of this department, forced his employees to constantly be near Primakov, not letting him sleep and forcing him to confess. The detainee was given only 2-3 hours a day to sleep, and even then in the office where the interrogation took place and where food was even delivered. Such continuous pressure eventually broke the will of the arrested person. In addition, according to Budarev, "during the investigation of the cases of Primakov and Putin, it was known that both of these persons testified about participation in the conspiracy after they

were beaten in Lefortovo prison." It can be assumed that the clue to the behavior of Tukhachevsky and his comrades does not lie in hypnosis. And not even in the special skill of investigators-inquisitors. One of them, Ushakov, after his arrest, lost any idea of the realities of the world around him, boasted during interrogations of his merits, counting on indulgence. Zinovy Markovich stated: "I moved with Leplevsky to Moscow in December 1936 ... Literally from the first days I diagnosed the existence of a military Trotskyist organization in the Red Army and the Fleet, developed a clear plan for opening it, and was the first to receive such a testimony from the former commander of the Caspian Flotilla Zakupneva... He walked confidently towards the disclosure of a military conspiracy. At the same time, I was also walking through another department to Eideman, and here I was not mistaken either. Well, about the fact that Feldman B.M.

anti-Soviet military conspiracy ... on the basis of which the arrests began on the 22nd of the same month ... needless to say. On May 25, they gave me to interrogate Tukhachevsky, who confessed on the 26th, and on the 30th I received Yakir. Leading this trio alone, without assistants (or "partners"), and having an indication that in a few days the case should be completed for hearing, I, almost without going to bed, pulled out more facts from them, more conspirators. Even on the day of the trial, early in the morning, I received additional evidence from Tukhachevsky about Apanasenko and some others. Among these "others" was the future People's Commissar S. K. Timoshenko.

The success of Ushakov, Avseevich and other investigators, bone-breakers and psychologists, who worked alone or in pairs, where the "evil" investigator provided the necessary contrast to the "good" one, depended heavily on the human material with which they had to deal. And the "material" as a whole turned out to be suitable. Neither Tukhachevsky nor the other defendants were fanatics of any idea, no matter how much Soviet propaganda tried to prove the opposite, presenting them as convinced communists, ready to give their lives for the party. By and large, the disgraced military leaders cared about their own careers. Back in the Civil War, Tukhachevsky, Yakir, Uborevich and others accepted both the Red Terror and the mass death of their compatriots in a fratricidal massacre. The idea, with which they connected their fate in one way or another, was personified by the same Stalin and the same Yezhov, and even by the same investigators and judges, dressed in the same uniform as the defendants with the same red stars. The arrest gave Tukhachevsky and his comrades a feeling of spiritual emptiness and loss of life orientation. They were not ready to sacrifice their lives for ideals, because they did not seem to have ideals. Primakov's nine-month stubbornness can also be explained primarily by the fear of death. He understood that the accusations were execution charges, and denied, however, only until, in May of the 37th, due to the haste of the case, they turned to a more serious conversation and began to deprive him of sleep and beat him. Torture and beatings did more than just cause physical pain. When they began, it became clear to those arrested that they would be forced to confess at any cost, that this was not some kind of monstrous mistake or provocation, but politics, and there was almost no hope of salvation. And then tempting investigators appeared: you just confess yourself, bring the other conspirators to clean v

repent, and you will get a discount, and there will definitely not be a tower. And in general: more, as many conspirators as possible, good and different, in high ranks and not very high ... At first, any brigade commander and even a major will do. How, at the February-March Plenum of 1937, Voroshilov introduced the modest aviation major B.I. Kuzmichev. And those under investigation willingly named the names or confirmed the participation in the conspiracy of those whom Yezhov's people pointed out to them. Perhaps Tukhachevsky, naming former cavalrymen I.R. Apanasenko and S.K. Timoshenko, wanted to take revenge on the Voroshilov group in such a peculiar way, acting on the principle: take the enemy to the grave with you ... On the very eve of the trial, June 10, Primakov gave evidence that compromised three of the eight members of the Special Judicial Presence, who were to judge the "conspirators" the next day ". This time the targets of the slander were the commanders of the ND. Kashirin, P.E. Dybenko and B.M. Shaposhnikov. True, as investigator Avseevich said, these testimonies were the fruit of the joint work of the former leader of the Red Cossacks and the current "iron people's commissar": "At the last stage of the investigation, Leplevsky, having summoned Primakov, gave him a whole list of major Red Army commanders who had not previously appeared in Primakov's testimony, and on behalf of Yezhov, he proposed to write on each of them ... This is how Primakov's testimony arose against Kashirin, Dybenko, Gamarnik (obviously, Vitaly Markovich did not know that he was no longer alive. - B.S.), Kuibyshev, **Gryaznov**, Uritsky, Kovalev, Vasilyev and others..." One way or another, but in 1937-1938, evidence was obtained from almost all Soviet military leaders, except perhaps Voroshilov (they did

not dare to slander against a member of the Politburo without Stalin's special sanction). But whom to execute and whom to pardon, Iosif Vissarionovich himself decided, not without taking into account, of course, Voroshilov's opinion. If all the denunciations had been set in motion and all the falsified testimonies had been believed, there would not have been a single marshal and army commander, commander and division commander, and even a company commander in the wild. Therefore, a certain sample was always carried out. Apanasenko and Tymoshenko named by Tukhachevsky were not touched, they were not touched

Budyonny and Shaposhnikov, some others were not touched ... And the benefit of the fact that there was dirt on each commander was considerable.

From June 1 to 4, a meeting of the Military Council was held, dedicated to the "military fascist conspiracy." It was there that the composition of the Special Judicial Presence of the highest military leaders was determined, which was to judge Tukhachevsky and his comrades. The members of the Council, listening to the quite absurd testimonies of the accused about the grandiose plans of treason and espionage, were well aware that the same testimonies either already exist on themselves, or can be obtained at any suitable moment. And if someone dares to publicly doubt the guilt of Tukhachevsky, Yakir and the others, then he will easily become the head or participant in the next conspiracy, exposed by Yezhov's valiant associates ...

On June 2, Stalin made a big speech at the meeting. He stated: "Uborevich, especially Yakir, Tukhachevsky, were engaged in systematic information of the German General Staff. Tukhachevsky - you read his testimony (Voices: Yes, you read it), - he handed over our operational plan, our operational plan - our holy of holies - to the German Reichswehr. Had a meeting with representatives of the German Reichswehr. Spy? Spy. Naturally, the following question may be

asked: how is it that these people, only yesterday Communists, have suddenly become themselves rabid tools in the hands of German espionage? And so they are recruited. Today they are required to give information. If you don't, we have your receipt that you've been recruited, we'll publish it. Under fear of exposure, they give information. Tomorrow they demand: no, this is not enough, give more and get money, give a receipt. After that, they demand - start a conspiracy, sabotage. First, sabotage, sabotage - show that you are acting on our side. If you don't show it, we'll expose it, tomorrow we'll hand it over to the agents of the Soviet government, and your heads will roll. They start sabotage. After that they say - no, you somehow try to arrange something in the Kremlin or in the Moscow garrison and generally take command posts. And they start trying as hard as they can. Further, this is not enough. Give real facts, something worthwhile. And they kill Kirov. Get it, they say. And they are told - go ahead, is it possible to remove the entire government. And they organize. They are told - organize a group that should arrest

government. Reports are flying that there is a group, we will do everything, arrest and so on. But this is not enough - to arrest, to kill several people, and the people, and the army? Well, it means that they report that such and such command posts are occupied in us, we ourselves occupy large command posts.

posts."

This fairy tale, created according to the laws of myth, with the growing cunning of the villains and the resigned victims, more and more entangled in the nets, was listened to by more than 100 wise people in the ranks of generals. They listened and believed, or pretended to believe. Meanwhile, no receipts from Tukhachevsky and other defendants in receiving money from the German General Staff were ever presented to the members of the Military Council. They do not appear in the materials of the investigation and the court either. It was not possible to find the notorious receipts in the German archives. After the war, the former intelligence chief of the SD, Walter Schellenberg, put into circulation the legend that the documents on the espionage of Tukhachevsky, Uborevich and others were fabricated by the Gestapo and planted on Stalin in order to force the dubious dictator to destroy the color of his generals. Upon closer examination, this legend does not stand up to scrutiny. I analyzed it in detail in the book "Mikhail Tukhachevsky: the life and death of a red marshal." Now I will only emphasize that Hitler, the leaders of the German special services and the generals of the Wehrmacht had no reason to desire the elimination of the Tukhachevsky group and the elevation of the group of Voroshilov, Budyonny and Shaposhnikov and Yegorov close to them. After all, then, along with the "antantophile" Tukhachevsky, Uborevich, who was considered a "Germanophile", was doomed to destruction. In addition, the German secret services did not have such detailed information about the senior command staff of the Red Army in order to more or less accurately determine the composition of the opposing groups. And even more so, the Germans could not imagine that the arrest of Tukhachevsky and his comrades would lead to arrests and repressions against tens of thousands of Red Army commanders. What are the real reasons for the fall of Tukhachevsky? I think they lie solely in terms of the conflict between the Tukhachevsky group and the Voroshilov group, especially close to Stalin. Iosif Vissarionovich himself looked at the General

Staff in a completely different way than Tukhachevsky, only as a supervisory body. Speaking at

At the Military Council on June 2, 1937, Stalin stated: "Why did we organize the General Staff? In order for him to check the commanders of the districts. He understood that the narrow-minded Voroshilov would be a reliable support in the People's Commissariat of Defense and a guarantee that the army would be on the side of the Secretary General. Speaking on June 1, 1937 at the Military Council, Kliment Efremovich said: "The fact that these - Tukhachevsky, Yakir, Uborevich and a number of other people - were close to each other, we knew this, it was not a secret. Last year, in the month of May, in my apartment, Tukhachevsky accused me and Budyonny, in the presence of comrade t. Stalin, Molotov and many others, in that I allegedly group a small group of people around me, I lead with them, direct the whole policy, etc. Then on the second day Tukhachevsky retracted everything that was said. Tov. Stalin then said that it was necessary to stop squabbling in private, it was necessary to arrange a meeting of the Politburo and at this meeting to analyze in detail what was the matter. And at this meeting, we analyzed all these issues and again came to the same result."

"He retracted his accusations," Stalin confirmed. "Yes, I refused," Kliment Efremovich continued, "although the group of Yakir and Uborevich at the meeting behaved rather aggressively towards me. Uborevich was still silent, while Gamarnik and Yakir behaved aggressively towards me."

At the trial, Uborevich admitted: "We went to the government to raise the issue of Voroshilov, to attack Voroshilov, in fact, we agreed with Gamarnik, who said that he would strongly oppose Voroshilov." After that May Day

banquet in 1936, the fate of Tukhachevsky, who was predicted to be Voroshilov's successor, was decided. But Stalin played cat and mouse with his unsuspecting victim for another year. In a civilized democratic country, the failure of the generals to get the minister of defense removed would have cost them their careers, but not their lives. In the Soviet Union, there was only one retribution - a bullet in the back of the head. On June 11, 1937, Tukhachevsky, Yakir, Uborevich, Kork, Feldman, Eideman, Primakov and Putna were tried by the Special Judicial Presence of the Supreme Court of the USSR in a closed session, without the participation of the prosecution and defense and without calling witnesses. The indictment on the evening of June 9 after a meeting with

Stalin, Molotov and Yezhov were approved by the USSR Prosecutor General A.Ya. Vyshinsky. The Presence included Marshals S.M. Budyonny and V.K. Blucher, commanders Ya.I. Alksnis, I.P. Belov, P.E. Dybenko, N.D. Kashirin, commander E.I. Goryachev, as well as the infamous chairman of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court, military lawyer of the 2nd rank V. V. Ulrikh, who presided over the process, but in fact did not play the role of a judge, but a prosecutor. Almost all the judges, except for Budyonny, Shaposhnikov and Ulrich, were subsequently shot (although Goryachev, like Gamarnik, was lucky: he managed to shoot

himself). Tukhachevsky and Uborevich refused to make a detailed speech, and their interrogation was conducted only in the form of questions and answers. Budyonny, in a memorandum to Stalin, outlined Tukhachevsky's testimony as follows: "Tukhachevsky, in his speech, first tried to refute his testimony, which he gave during the preliminary investigation. Tukhachevsky began by saying that before Hitler's fascist coup in Germany, the Red Army was preparing against the Poles and was capable of defeating the Polish state. However, when Hitler came to power in Germany, who merged with the Poles and deployed 108 divisions out of 32 German divisions, the Red Army, in comparison with the German and Polish armies, was 60–62 divisions smaller in size ... "With the number of divisions here, obviously some confusion. Probably Semyon Mikhailovich misheard. Indeed, back in 1935, Tukhachevsky, in the article "Military Plans of Today's Germany", indicated that by 1933 the Reichswehr had only 8 divisions, of which Hitler created 21 formations in 1934 and was going to bring their number to 36. 108 divisions, according to Mikhail Nikolaevich, Germany could put up only in wartime, after mobilization. The Red Army already in the 35th year had more than 100 divisions with a total strength of 930 thousand people. And by the end of 1937, the number of Soviet armed forces had already exceeded one and a half million. Budyonny continued: "Tukhachevsky tried to popularize before the audience

present at the trial, as it were, his business considerations in the sense that he foresaw everything, he tried to prove to the government that the situation that had arisen was leading the country to defeat and that supposedly no one listened to him. But tov. Ulrich, on advice

some members of the Special Presence, interrupted Tukhachevsky and asked the question: how does Tukhachevsky connect this motivation with what he testified at the preliminary investigation, namely, that he was connected with the German General Staff and worked as an agent of German intelligence since 1925? Then Tukhachevsky declared that, of course, he could also be considered a spy, but that he actually did not give any information to German

intelligence ... "It seems that on the last day of his life, the defeated marshal thought about his place in history, wanted to see in the transcript of the process reflected his activities in the development and reform of the Red Army. I hoped that someday historians would read the transcript of the trial (its text of several hundred pages has not yet been published). At 11:35 p.m. on June 11,

Ulrich announced a harsh and unfair sentence. All eight were sentenced to death, deprivation of all military ranks and awards, and confiscation of all property belonging to them personally. They shot him right there, on the night of the 12th.

People in the USSR and beyond for several decades wondered what happened behind the closed doors of the courtroom. The trial and execution of Tukhachevsky also caused lively comments in the foreign press, especially in Germany, where they were outraged that the defendants were accused of criminal ties with German intelligence and the leadership of the Reichswehr. The Germans perfectly understood that the participants in the "military-fascist conspiracy" were made German and Japanese spies only because at that moment the Soviet Union had tense relations with these countries. There can be no doubt: had the investigation and trial been carried out after the Soviet-German non-aggression pact of August 23, 1939, Tukhachevsky would have been declared an agent not of Germany and Japan, but of England and France. Fortunately, Mikhail Nikolayevich visited both countries and met with the local military and politicians.

The German military magazine *Deutsche Ver*, in connection with the execution of Tukhachevsky on June 24, 1937, wrote: "In the first days of May, "evidence" was collected about the imaginary preparation of a coup by the Red Army. The accusations against Tukhachevsky were collected in full and announced in the presence of everyone by the people's commissar of defense: Tukhachevsky was preparing a coup in order to announce

national military dictatorship headed by itself." The Wehrmacht undoubtedly received generally reliable information about the meeting of the Military Council, where Voroshilov and Stalin defame the "conspirators". The author of the published article "The Happiness and Death of Tukhachevsky" highly appreciated the marshal's talent: "Tukhachevsky was undoubtedly the most outstanding of all the red commanders, and he cannot be replaced. History will someday tell us what role he actually played in building this army... No one will ever know what happened in the process... It is suggestive that three such well-known representatives of the younger generation as Uborevich joined Tukhachevsky, Yakir and Eideman... If we take into account the suicide of Gamarnik... then the matter becomes even more serious. Tukhachevsky wanted to be the "Russian Napoleon", who, however, showed his cards too early, or, as always, he was betrayed at the last moment. Kaganovich-Stalin are again masters in the country, and the International is triumphant. How long?" In another German military publication, *Verfront*, it was stated: "In contrast to the brief era of Tukhachevsky, parade generals and heroes of the Civil War again came to the fore. At the same time, through the restoration of military councils and a significant strengthening of the political apparatus, dualism was restored, eliminated in the interests of the army's combat effectiveness by the executed marshal Tukhachevsky.

The youngest Soviet marshal dreamed of creating the world's greatest army, standing at the head of it and someday testing it in action. The slogan of a world proletarian revolution was very well suited for such a cause, and the Bolsheviks seemed to Mikhail Nikolayevich quite acceptable allies. In order to achieve his goal, he was ready to go to great lengths: gassing the Tambov peasants, shooting the rebellious Kronstadt sailors, forcing all the people to tighten their belts and make cannons instead of butter ... And he did not think that with his mind, talent, independence of character under a totalitarian dictatorship cannot survive. And didn't survive.

ALEXANDER EGOROV MARSHAL-VRAL

Of the exterminated marshals, Alexander Ilyich Yegorov, along with Khudyakov-Khanferyants, is the least known. If Tukhachevsky, Blucher, Beria, even Kulik were symbolic figures, then Yegorov always remained somehow in the shadows. He also received the rank of marshal in the 35th according to his position, simply because he was the chief of the General Staff of the Red Army. Propaganda called Alexander Ilyich one of the authors of the plan to defeat Denikin, but did not highlight his role too much. After all, Stalin was supposed to be considered the main architect of victory in the South. Alexander Ilyich, along with Voroshilov and Budyonny, was among the most obedient Stalinist marshals. Why he got into the meat grinder of repression is still not completely clear. Just as until recently, many circumstances of Yegorov's biography remained in the fog.

Alexander Ilyich Egorov was born on 13/25, 1883 in the city of Buzuluk into a bourgeois family. However, even this fact most of his life he had to hide. Here is what was said, for example, in an autobiography written by the future marshal in August 1926: "I was born in 1885 in the Buzuluk district of the former Samara province (now the Middle Volga region). My father, coming from peasants, in the first half of my life was a worker, a loader at a railway station and a river pier, and later, already in old age, having lost his strength, he was hired as a clerk. Extremely difficult material living conditions were intensified by a large family, in which only the father was, in fact, able-bodied, while the father's earnings were not constant, but from time to time, which the current day would give, and fluctuated, as far as I remember, from 50 kopecks. up to 75 kop. And rarely up to 1 ruble per day. In addition, the father suffered from alcoholism, which brought great suffering to the family. I can't forget those days, and there were a lot of them, when my mother stood for hours at the frozen windows of the tavern, looking out for my father there and trying to pull him out and take him home. For some reason, my mother always took me with her on these occasions, saying that my father was more

listens to me and does not beat her in front of me. These difficult, joyless minutes will remain in my memory for

the rest of my life. In such conditions of extreme poverty passed my childhood years. I do not remember a single year that we lived it in the same apartment. We were kicked out for not being able to pay, although the payment was expressed in several rubles, and

the apartment itself was a shack. As a boy of 11, I was forced to go to work and enter a blacksmith's workshop, where at first I fanned the forge with bellows, cleaned the forge, etc., and then gradually was transferred to the hammer and apprentice. During the period when my father was drinking, my older brother and I replaced him at work in the loaders' artel. In total, I was engaged in this work for 6 years and during

this period I graduated from a parochial school. I don't know under what conditions, but I began to read from early childhood, and this gave me the opportunity to easily pass the initial diploma of the parochial school, and

then pass the exam for the secondary school course as an external student. While serving my military service as a volunteer, I was seconded to the Kazan Military School, from which I graduated in April 1905. During my stay at the school, in 1904, I joined a secret socialist circle and joined the program of the social revolutionaries. Working in the circle in the period 1904-1905, I took part in the revolutionary preparation of the school, which in the fall of 1905, led by this circle, joined the revolutionary wave. After finishing school, I served as an officer in the army. The officer service itself was not to my liking, and besides, a certain attitude towards me as a politically unreliable person, which, apparently, was reported back from the military school, forced me to leave the army. In search of work and occupation, I went on stage (Egorov had a good baritone. - **B.S.**). The data for this work turned out to be quite satisfactory. Under the pretext of perfecting the art of the theater, in 1910 I was in Italy. I spent this period until 1914 on the stage, and in 1914 I was mobilized and sent to the front of the imperialist war.

In his last autobiography, written on February 26, 1933, Alexander Ilyich spoke in a similar way about the beginning of his life, omitting only exotic details about an opera career and a trip to Italy (suddenly they would think that he was familiar with

Benito Mussolini?). Egorov still claimed that he was born in 1885, that his father worked most of his life "as a working loader at the railway station and river pier, and later, already in old age, served as a clerk." He repeated almost verbatim the phrase about the difficult material conditions of life of a large family, but this time he did not mention a single word about his father's alcoholism. Alexander Ilyich also insisted that he was self-taught, only an external student who managed to pass the exams for the gymnasium course: "I did not have to engage in systematic self-education. During the period of work, due to the good attitude towards me, I managed to find time for teaching. I had to work very hard and mostly at night. However, I can say that, despite all the difficulties, both everyday and in time, I still studied well, and therefore I managed to pass the course of the city school and then, within 2-3 years, go through the program and take an external exam for the course high school." He noted that he joined the "program of socialist revolutionaries" back in 1904 at the Kazan Military School (that is, the cadet school, but the very word "junker" under Soviet rule was abusive, and Alexander Ilyich preferred not to use it).

In 1933, Yegorov described his participation in the First World War rather sparingly, emphasizing more on revolutionary activity: "In the World War I was drafted into the army. The February revolution found me at the front. Revolutionary work unfolded, and illegal party circles, which had been founded even before the February Revolution, were united into a regimental party committee. In the future, I had to take over the organization of the divisional, corps and army executive committees and party factions in them. At the May Day rally in the 33rd division in 1917, for speaking out and agitating among the units against the offensive, I was subjected to a military court, where I was sentenced to removal from office with the initiation of a case of imprisonment in a fortress. The performance of the soldiers of the regiment and the development of the revolutionary movement in the military units freed me from this conclusion. During this period, I organized a detachment of the Red Guard from units of the 33rd division, on which the party committee of the Bolsheviks and Left Social Revolutionaries relied in the October days.

From the Army Committee of Soldiers' Deputies of the 1st Army, I was elected to the 2nd All-Russian Congress of Soviets and a member of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of this convocation. In December 1917, as one of the members of the organizational bureau, I was entrusted with the task of holding the All-Russian Congress for the demobilization of the old army. As a deputy Chairman of this congress, I took part in its holding. The congress completed its work and the Commissariat for the Demobilization of the Old Army was formed, of which I was appointed a member.

One of the tasks of the Commissariat was the organization of Red Guard detachments both for the implementation of measures to protect and evacuate the property of the old army, and for active operations against the advancing Germans. Personally, at that time I was a commander in the detachment of the Red Guards of the Commissariat, the head of which was Comrade Podvoisky N.I. and deputy - comrade. Kedrov M.S. After the evacuation of government

agencies from Petrograd to Moscow, I worked in the People's Commissariat for the Sea, acting as chairman of the Tsentroplenbezh (this terrible abbreviation stands for the Central Collegium for Prisoners and Refugees. - B.S.), commissar of the All-Russian General Staff and chairman of the Higher Attestation **Commission** for selection of officers for the Red Army. In the autobiography of 1926, the activities of the future marshal in 1914–1917 were described in somewhat more detail

than seven years later: "Revolutionary work on the front of the imperialist war was carried out by me in the field of agitation and propaganda, and in the first period of the war it was extremely severe. In the subsequent years of the war, revolutionary work was facilitated: already during this period, illegal party circles were founded in military units. Having passed command positions in a platoon, company and battalion, at the time of the February Revolution I commanded a regiment. In 1933, Alexander Ilyich prudently did not name his positions in the old army, so that readers of his autobiography would not have unpleasant questions: why did the officer who campaigned against the war remain in good standing with his superiors and make such a successful career? By the way, about

command of the platoon Egorov was modest. In the First World War, he entered the rank of staff captain as a company commander.

It should also be noted that in the 26th year, Yegorov mentioned that in December 1917 he received "an assignment from the Military Department of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee to go to Ukraine and put before the Central Rada of Ukraine the question of the procedure for satisfying the material supply of soldiers of the old army demobilized from the front and passing through territory of the Ukrainian Republic. In connection with the general political conditions that were created at that time in Ukraine, I was arrested along with other Ukrainian comrades (Mikhailichenko, Chudnovsky, etc.) and was imprisoned in a fortress, from which I was released at the end of January 1918 by the Red troops who took Kiev ". In 1933, it was better not to talk about this episode. Most recently, the Red Army was purged of former tsarist officers. And then it turned out that Yegorov, although not of his own free will, but for some time was in the territory controlled by the anti-Soviet government. And why didn't the Ukrainian authorities shoot him? Maybe Alexander Ilyich gave them some secrets? Such thoughts could well have arisen among the over-vigilant Chekists, and Yegorov did not want to give

food for dangerous conjectures. In the 26th year, unlike the 33rd, Alexander Ilyich spoke in some detail about how he broke with the Left SRs in July 1918: Since the autumn of 1917, he fully and completely accepted the ideas of the Communist Party. Reproaching the fact that the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries acted, I officially announced this in the press and left this party.

Indeed, on July 16, 1918, Pravda published Yegorov's statement, which stated: "I categorically protest against the criminal antics of some members of the party, led by a presumptuous handful of bourgeois intellectuals, and resolutely break with them. Having endured all the oppression and burden of the last war on my shoulders and having combat experience in this regard, I do not at all share the views of the Central Committee of the Party of Left Socialist Revolutionaries on the issues of waging war and building the army; Soviet power, by virtue of which I accepted

assume the responsibility of chairman of the Higher Attestation Commission. In 1933, there was no need to emphasize his past connection with the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, so the future "marshal" did not even write about his break with this party. Moreover, Yegorov's statement appeared a few days after the suppression of the Left Social Revolutionary uprising in Moscow, and at the top they might think that Alexander Ilyich was simply waiting to see who he would take.

In the autobiography of the 33-year-old, Alexander Ilyich wrote about his participation in the Civil War: "In the summer of 1918, uniting the Red Guard detachments of Sievers, Mironov and Kikvidze, he led operations against Krasnov, at the same time organizing regular divisions of the 9th Army from these detachments as commander of this army. In December 1918 he was appointed commander of the 10th army for the defense of Tsaritsyn. In May 1919, while directing the operations of the 10th Army on the Sal River and personally leading Budyonny's cavalry corps on the attack, he was seriously wounded. For this operation he was awarded the Order of the Red Banner. Not having time to recover from his wound, due to the general situation at the front, he was appointed assistant commander of the Southern Front and a member of the Revolutionary Council of this front with the immediate task of commanding the 14th Army of the Southern Front. In October 1919 he was appointed commander of the armies of the Southern Front, at the head of which he conducted an operation to defeat Denikin. After the elimination of Denikinism, he was appointed commander of the Southwestern Front against White Poland. After the end of the Polish operation and the liquidation of Wrangel, he was appointed commander of the Kyiv military district. In April 1921 he was appointed commander of the 7th Red Army and the Petrograd Military District. Then in September 1921 he was appointed commander of the Western Front, from where in February 1922 he was appointed commander of the Caucasian Red Banner Army. In the spring of 1924 he was appointed to the post of commander of the troops of Ukraine and the Crimea and a member of the Revolutionary Council of the Union. In 1927 he was appointed Commander of the Belorussian Military District, which he led until I was appointed Chief of Staff of the Wo

Wounded 2 times in the Civil War. For military distinctions in the Civil War and for work in the Red Army he was awarded 4 orders of the Red Banner, Honorary Combat Red Banner

revolutionary weapons and enlisted in the lists of persons of the General Staff. He was a member of the Georgia. CEC, Dec. Central Executive Committee, All-Russian Central Executive Committee, Central Executive Committee of the BSSR, All-Russian Central Executive Committee, and at the present time I am a member of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR of all convocations and a member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Union.

If you believe what Yegorov wrote about himself, then he has a rich revolutionary biography. But that's just not to be believed. Unfortunately, almost everything here, with the exception of awards, titles and some dates of service in the Red Army, is a pure lie, a lie from the first to the last word. Let's start with the date of birth and the parents of the future Soviet

commander. Egorov's application for enrollment in the Kazan Infantry Cadet School and the questionnaire attached to it and an extract from the register of births prove that Alexander Ilyich was born on October 13/25, 1883, and his parents were Buzuluk tradesmen Ilya Fedorovich and Maria Ivanovna Egorovs, nothing to do with the peasant class did not have. Whether the father really drank deeply, as Egorov Jr. claimed, we cannot say with certainty today. But the fact that I have never been a loader worker can be said with confidence. Ilya Fedorovich worked as a clerk and manager for not too-! wealthy Buzuluk merchants. The family, where there were four children, of course, did not live in luxury, but, of course, was not a beggar either. Yes, at that time, this whole layer, which in the West is now ranked as the middle class, did not live very prosperously. My great-grandfather, oh Mikhail Sokolov, was an Orthodox priest in Vladimir. But, according to the stories of the grandfather, the family, where there were 10 children, ate meat only on Sundays and holidays. And, of course, Alexander's admission to the cadet school for full state support was very useful for his parents. And the future officer's salary in their eyes was quite a solid income. In general, I'm afraid, the future marshal came up with his biography under the strong influence of Gorky's autobiographical trilogy.

Alexander Ilyich Yegorov entered the military service in 1901 as a volunteer in the 4th Nesvizh Grenadier Regiment, in May 1902 he was promoted to non-commissioned officer and in the autumn of that year became a cadet. The track record of the captain of the 132nd Bendery Regiment Alexander Ilyich Yegorov, compiled in June 1916, testifies: "There were no circumstances in the service of this chief officer,

depriving him of the right to receive a badge of distinction of impeccable service or postponing the term of service to this badge. It turns out that the brave captain did not have a single day break in his service, was of the Orthodox faith, came from the townspeople of the Samara province, graduated in the usual way, and not externally, the Samara classical gymnasium, and then the Kazan infantry cadet school in the 1st category. Egorov did not go to any Italy and did not sing in any opera. In the revolutionary events of 1905-1907, he really took an active part, but only in the same way as in the well-known joke about his grandfather who fought with Chapaev. Let me briefly remind you of this anecdote. Little Johnny brought his grandfather to school, who fought with Chapaev. Grandfather is asked: "Tell me how everything was there, near Lbischensk." And the old man cheerfully begins: "We are going, which means that at night, quietly, quietly, we removed the guards, entered the city. Here I command: "Hundred! Chop the red bastard into cabbage! Well, they, the red ones, ran to the river to save themselves. Their chief, Chapaev, a thin one with a mustache, swam across the Urals. I - to the machine gun. I gave the first turn in front of him, the second behind him. And I got in the third round. He

Marshal Yegorov should have also talked about his participation in the revolution of 1905. But he, of course, did not leave truthful memoirs, only an indistinct story about this period of his life in his autobiographies. Meanwhile, the track record draws a fairly complete picture of the activities of the second lieutenant of the 13th Erivan Life Grenadier Regiment Yegorov in the suppression of the revolutionary movement in Transcaucasia. In June-October 1905, he was on guard duty in Baku, in October-November he smashed the rebellious Georgian peasants in Guria, then, until January 1906, he assisted the civil authorities of Tiflis in suppressing the unrest. For ten months, until October 1906, Yegorov was in Gori "to suppress the rebellion." How the troops acted can be judged from a telephone message sent on December 26, 1905 by the General Staff to all military districts: "The Sovereign Emperor deigned to point out to the highest that the troops are obliged to answer the shots with shots and crush the slightest thing. Obviously, Alexander Ilyich encroachment armed resistance." performed the unrespectable function of a punisher quite successfully, since on March 10, 1907 he was awarded the Order of St. Stanislaus of the 3rd degree, and on August 31, 1909 he received

badge "In memory of the 50th anniversary of the conquest of the Eastern Caucasus". It is clear that the red marshal could not boast of such feats and awards. And why it took Alexander Ilyich to rejuvenate himself for two years, it is difficult to fully understand even today. Maybe to highlight your career successes? At the age of 32 - and already a colonel!

Further, Yegorov's service proceeded quite measuredly, without any bright events. Unless there was an important change in his personal life. In the spring of 1911, Alexander Ilyich married the daughter of an honorary citizen of Tiflis, Varvara Alexandrovna Vasilyeva, who had just graduated from high school. On March 31, 1913, their daughter Tatyana was born. True, Ilya Fedorovich Yegorov did not give a parental blessing for the marriage, since the son never introduced the bride to him (although the romance had lasted for three years). Apparently, their relationship *with* Alexander Ilyich was not too warm. That is why the future marshal later did not hesitate to write in detail in his autobiography about his father's real or imaginary alcoholism.

In April 1911, Yegorov was transferred to the 132nd Bendery Regiment, located in the Kiev Military District. He met World War I as a staff captain and company commander. "It sucked in the stomach and the hair stood on end when we went on the attack for the first time on August 13, 1914," recalled Alexander Ilyich in the 37th. His company then stormed the village of Viertsbloni in Galicia, captured 60 prisoners. Egorov was awarded the St. George's weapon for this battle. Then he received 6 more military awards. He was wounded twice and wounded three times. On May 30, 1916, Yegorov was promoted to captain, and on November 27 the same year - to lieutenant colonel.

After the February Revolution, Alexander Ilyich joined the Socialist-Revolutionary Party. People like him were called "March SRs." These were people who, after the fall of the autocracy, hastened to associate themselves with one of the revolutionary parties, primarily for career reasons. Having become a Socialist-Revolutionary, Yegorov still stood up for the war to a victorious end. It is no coincidence that in the spring of the 17th he wrote a brief memo for soldiers with the history of the Bendery regiment in order to "with love and desire vividly acquaint young Bendery with the glorious deeds of the regiment" and encourage them to fight just as valiantly in the future. By that time, Lieutenant Colonel Egorov was an officer for special

assignments at the headquarters of the regiment, which occupied positions along the Western Dvina, on the Northern Front. Membership in the Socialist-Revolutionary Party opened the way for a military-political career. Alexander Ilyich led the Socialist-Revolutionary faction in the divisional cabinet, and in August 1917 he became a member of the Council of Military Deputies of the 12th Army. Only the cool wing of the party, which emerged in the summer of the 17th, had nothing to do with Yegorov until late autumn. As stated in one of the denunciations received by the marshal at the beginning of 1938, at the army congress in November 17th, Lieutenant Colonel Yegorov spoke as a Right Socialist-Revolutionary and sharply criticized Lenin and the Bolsheviks, who then acted in alliance with the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries. In addition, on November 9, he was promoted to colonel on the basis of a proposal made under the Provision

However, already a few days after the October Revolution, when the position of the new government in Petrograd was consolidated, Yegorov went over to the Left SRs. But he only stayed with them for six months. When in July 1918, during the Bolshevik-provoked Left SR rebellion, this party was outlawed, Alexander Ilyich publicly announced a break with the Left SRs and became a Bolshevik. Since he turned out to be one of the few officers in the staff officer ranks who not only supported the October Revolution, but also became a member of the revolutionary party, promotion went very quickly. Here Yegorov's autobiographies do not diverge from the true state of affairs. But the marshal deliberately distorted the circumstances of his injury on the Sal River in May

1919. Then Yegorov, together with the cavalry commander of the 10th Army B.M. Dumenko led the attack of the shock group against the Cossacks of General P.N. Krasnov. Both of them came under machine-gun fire and were badly wounded. Then Yegorov and Dumenko were awarded the Orders of the Red Banner for this fight. And it was Dumenko, and not Budyonny, who was the first commander of the 1st Consolidated Cavalry Corps. However, later, in May 1920, Boris Mokeevich, not without the assistance of competitors - Voroshilov and Budyonny - was shot on an unproven charge of murdering the corps commissar V.N. Mikeladze. And Yegorov naturally replaced Dumenko with Budyonny in the episode of his injury. Alexander Ilyich very sparingly reports on his service in the Caucasus in 1922-1924. Maybe because I had to

to do the same thing as in 1905-1907. In the first half of the 1920s, in the Transcaucasus, Egorov came in handy with the already familiar craft of the punisher. He fought with Armenian, Azerbaijani and Georgian rebel groups. In reports, the red command invariably referred to them as "bands". In particular, on February 22, 1923, Yegorov ordered:

"Gangsterism should be eliminated as soon as possible and the bandits should be dealt with mercilessly and severely; the population, which is unfriendly to the Soviet power, to disarm, accomplices and harborers to arrest. In fact, Alexander Ilyich used the same methods that bordered on genocide as Tukhachevsky used to suppress the Tambov uprising two years earlier. For this, the communist governments of Azerbaijan and Georgia awarded Yegorov with the Republican Orders of the Red Banner. In terms of the number of deliberate distortions

of his own biography, Alexander Ilyich left far behind any of the Soviet military leaders. I don't know about you, reader, but I personally had a deep distrust of both the military leader and the human qualities of Yegorov. Egorov's rapid career during the Civil War and later was greatly facilitated

by the fact that he had a chance to fight alongside Stalin and Voroshilov against Krasnov, Denikin and the Poles. Their military commonwealth began near Tsaritsyn, where Yegorov formed the 9th Army from scattered partisan detachments. Then he commanded the 10th Army, which in January 19th defeated the Cossacks on the outskirts of the "red Verdun". In the spring and summer of the 19th, I had to fight with the Caucasian Volunteer Army of General P.N., who had come to the aid of Krasnov. Wrangel, which on June 30, 1919 managed to capture Tsaritsyn. Yegorov was in the hospital at that time. On July 31, for the May battle on the Sal River, he was awarded the Order of the Red Banner. The order of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic on the award, in particular, said: "The enemy, having set himself the goal of breaking through the front of the 10th Army near Pletnev, tried all the time, bypassing the flanks, to separate the army forces into two parts in order to capture Kotelnikovo, to finish with each part separately. Comrade Yegorov, firmly determined not to let the enemy carry out this plan and thereby save the remaining units, personally took command of the units of the 4th and 6th cavalry divisions and rushed

with them to attack the enemy. Despite the desperate resistance of the enemy, especially his infantry units, Comrade Yegorov crushed him with a swift onslaught and threw him to the southern bank of the Sal River. As a result of this dashing attack, all the enemy infantry, located on the northern coast, about 2-3 regiments, remained in our hands and was partly taken prisoner, and partly cut down. In our hands were rich trophies in the form of guns and machine guns. Comrade Yegorov was wounded in one of the attacks, but, despite the rather severe through bullet wound of the supraclavicular region with significant hemorrhage, he did not leave the battlefield until the deputy called by him arrived.

On July 9, 1919, Alexander Ilyich was briefly appointed assistant commander and member of the RVS of the Southern Front, while simultaneously taking command of the 14th Army. This army left Kyiv with battles, and then defended Bryansk. In Bryansk, the future marshal met his second wife, a graduate of the local gymnasium Galina Antonovna Tseshkovskaya. On September 27, the South-Eastern Front was separated from the Southern Front, and Yegorov became the commander of the new Southern Front. Denikin's troops, in pursuance of the directive given on July 3, 1919, continued to move towards Moscow.

The name of Yegorov is usually associated with a plan to defeat the White armies in the South. The famous military historian N.E. Kakurin in 1926 wrote about Yegorov's entry into the post of commander of the south, that his name "is connected with the decisive successes of the Southern Front." Later, from 1929, after the celebration of Stalin's 50th anniversary and the appearance of Voroshilov's article "Stalin and the Red Army", all successes in the fight against Krasnov and Denikin began to be associated with the name of Stalin. Egorov himself in 1937, in the article "The Heroic Epic", which appeared in Pravda on January 2, 1937, obsequiously stated: "On the 17th anniversary of the struggle for Tsaritsyn, I cannot but briefly recall one of the classic lessons of military art, which was given to us from the commanding heights of the Tsaritsyn fields by Comrade Stalin, the great strategist of class battles. Combat operations carried out by Comrade Stalin are an indelible lesson in our minds as examples of classical military art of the Civil War era. To him, Comrade Stalin, we owe the fact that on the Tsaritsyn fields the cadres of the Red Army, and first of all the glorious cadres of the 10th and First Cavalry Army, received visual, classic models

methods of warfare." The colonel of the old army was ready to learn the art of war **from** a man whose entire army service was reduced to a month's stay in a reserve regiment. In his

autobiography of 1926, Yegorov proudly wrote about himself as the author of the plan to defeat Krasnov's army near Tsaritsyn in January 1919: this time was only in its infancy, in the person of the cavalry brigade of Comrade Budyonny. In 1933, Alexander Ilyich no longer insisted on his authorship. Two years earlier, he also published the book "The defeat of Denikin. 1919", where he emphasized: "Studying the events associated with the defense of Tsaritsyn, and referring not only to this period, but to the entire era of the Civil War, each of us clearly sees what a grandiose work he did on all fronts, and in particular on the Tsaritsyno front, I.V. Stalin." True, Alexander Ilyich preferred to illustrate the leader's concrete contribution to the victory over Krasnov and Denikin not in his own words, but with extensive quotations (several pages each) from Voroshilov's article "Stalin and the Red Army" mentioned above. Yegorov also did not forget Kliment Efremovich with a kind word: "Only an iron and unshakable will to win made it possible for Comrade Stalin and Comrade Voroshilov, these two Bolshevik revolutionaries, the best representatives of the old Leninist guard, not only to organize and rally manpower around the tasks of defense, but also to defend the "red Verdun" in fierce battles with the Cossack counter-revolution." The former commander of the Southern Front also claimed that the defeat of the Cossack cavalry near Voronezh, which determined the turning point of the 1919 campaign in favor of the Red Army, was the result of Budyonny's personal initiative, and not the orders of the main command: front command of the plan, but as a result of Budyonny's personal initiative, which coincided with the requirements of the moment. Egorov attributed the "brilliant idea" of creating a cavalry army entirely to Stalin, who at that time held the position of a member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Southern Front. But, as can be judged from the book of Kakurin, all these statements were far from the truth. Nikolai Evgenievich noted, with reference to the relevant archival document, that

“The command of the Southern Front set on October 7 the task of finding and defeating the cavalry corps of Shkuro and Mamontov to the cavalry corps of Budyonny. To reinforce Budyonny's corps, the command of the 8th Army was to place at its disposal its cavalry group, the 56th Cavalry Brigade, and reinforce it, if necessary, with one or two infantry battalions. Summing up the results of

the struggle against Denikin, Yegorov paid tribute to the enemy, but emphasized the inability of the White high command to solve political and strategic tasks: “In many cases, units of the White armies acted very successfully. The officer units fought stubbornly and fiercely, and the presence of large cavalry units, especially in the first period of the 1919 campaign, gave the Whites an invaluable advantage over the Red troops, because it made it possible to use maneuvering, create superiority in forces at a time when it was least expected, and nullify the successes previously achieved by the Reds. However, White often used his advantage in the wrong direction. It was unnecessary to move north in winter, and the Whites had every reason to try to end the fight within the Don region. But a bad policy determined a bad strategy, and whites experienced all the disadvantages of the latter in their own skin. The endless spread in space (Dnepr-Volga), in the absence of the proper number of forces, did not in any way contribute to further advancement in the center, and the right flank was hopeless in terms of success. However, as far as the combat activity of the Volunteer Army is concerned, we must acknowledge a number of major successes and sometimes very skillful actions. Starting with the liquidation of the Selivachev group at Kupyansk and the brilliant use of cavalry maneuvers here, the further actions of the Volunteer Army proceed in strict sequence and in accordance with the tasks assigned to it by the "Moscow directive". The army breaks through the front at Kursk and immediately proceeds to ensure its further advance, expanding this breakthrough to strategic proportions and showing the necessary care for both of its flanks. But as we move towards Orel, the left flank gradually begins to fall out of the attention of the commander of the Volunteer Army, and this circumstance played a disastrous role for the entire operation.

In his autobiography of 1926, Alexander Ilyich attributed the plan of defeating Denikin's troops exclusively to himself, and reduced Stalin's role to propaganda: I didn't see the Stalinist plan in creating the Cavalry! - **B.S.**), at the junction of the "Volunteer" and the Cossack army in the direction of Voronezh - Donbass - Rostov. The calculation was correct: Denikin was defeated, and our units hoisted the red flag at the headquarters of the counter-revolution in Rostov-on-Don. The main task was to achieve a turning point in the mood of the fighters, stop the retreat and, having prepared, deliver a decisive blow to Denikin. I began processing the mood, first of all, from the Budyonny corps, being, together with Comrade Stalin, connected with the Budyonnovites in the battles of the 10th Army; we addressed the soldiers of the corps with an appeal in which, having outlined the extremely difficult situation of the front and the Republic of Soviets, we called on them to fulfill their revolutionary duty. "The Republic is counting on you as a shock fist," we wrote in the appeal. In response, the cavalry corps declared its full readiness to carry out any task. In the book of 1931, without seeming to reject Stalin's decisive contribution, Yegorov, nevertheless, spoke in detail about the plan of the operation to defeat the Volunteer Army as his own: "After success at Orel is achieved, the White offensive will be suspended, and the 14th and 13th armies will go over to the counteroffensive - Budyonny's corps was to begin to fulfill the main task of the front - breaking the white armies into two parts. This was the main idea, the core of the entire

operational concept of the new command of the Southern Front (i.e., Yegorov and Stalin, who was appointed a member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Front. - **B.S.**); everything else played only an auxiliary, secondary role. Strategically, this gap in the rear of the White armies into two parts by Budyonny's cavalry corps, inspired on the flanks by the armies of the front, pursued the goal of separating the Volunteer Army from the Don, and, consequently, the direction of the strike was to pass somewhere between Kursk and Voronezh; politically it was a branch of the

Cossacks

from Denikin."

In 1933, as we remember, the future marshal had to express himself much more modestly about his own role: "In October 1919 he was appointed commander of the armies of the Southern Front, at the head of which he led the operation to defeat Denikin." But who, after all, was the author of what, after 1929, they began to call "the brilliant plan to defeat Denikin"? The politically unbiased Kakurin gave Stalinist a very definite answer to this question, as always, with references to the archives: "The High Command intended to take the organization of the counterattack into its own hands, preparing it from the depths outside the direct influence of the enemy. We can see the first inception of this idea from the telegram of the commander-in-chief to the commander (Egorov's predecessor V.N. Egoriev. - **B.S.**) dated September 24, No. who will remain under the control of the Commander-in-Chief. In the following days, this idea was finalized. It was planned to strike at the most advanced units of the Volunteer Army in two groups to the north: one - from the area northwest of the city of Orel - by the reserve of the commander-in-chief as part of the Latvian

division, Pavlov's brigade and Primakov's cavalry brigade of red Cossacks Primakov with a total number of 10 thousand bayonets, 1500 sabers and 80 guns; the other - as part of the Budyonny cavalry corps, together with the cavalry units of the 8th Army from the area east of Voronezh. Thus, here there was an idea of cutting off the enemy's wedge with blows to its base. This is how the Soviet troops acted in October-November. In fact, therefore, the plan to defeat Denikin was born from the commander-in-chief of the Red Army S.S. Kamenev and Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic L.D. Trotsky (the latter was one of the initiators of the formation of the Red Cossacks as a shock cavalry force along with the Cavalry). But Yegorov could not and did not want to write about it. It was much more pleasant to wear the

laurels of the victorious Denikin, albeit together with Stalin. But Iosif Vissarionovich did not want to share glory with anyone, and this circumstance ultimately turned out to be fatal for Yegorov.

After the defeat of Denikin's armies, Alexander Ilyich led the Southwestern Front, which acted against Poland. How did it end

campaign against Warsaw, we already know from the essay about Tukhachevsky. In 1929 Yegorov published the book Lvov-Warsaw. 1920", where he sought to justify the leadership of the Southwestern Front, to relieve him of responsibility for the defeat of the Soviet troops. And it's hard to disagree with

his arguments. Here is what Yegorov wrote about the transfer of the First Cavalry Army to the Western Front: "From the area where the 1st Cavalry Army was located on August 10 (the Radzivilov-Toporov area) to the area where the Polish shock 4th Army was concentrated (on the Vepsh River - on the Kotsk-Ivan city line) by air lines about 240–250 km. Even under the condition of moving without battles simply in marching order, 1 Cavalry Army could cover this distance, given the fatigue of its previous battles, at best, no less than 8-9 days (3 transitions of 40-45 km, a day's work, etc.) , i.e., could reach the line of the river. Vepsh only by August 19–20, and even this calculation sins with an exaggeration for this particular case. At the same time, it is also necessary to make an amendment to it due to the resistance of the enemy. Let us take as a basis the average speed of movement that the Cavalry Army showed in precisely such a situation in the 20th of August during its movement from Lvov to Zamosc, i.e. 100 km in 4 days. Based on these figures, one must think that before August 21–23, the Cavalry Army of the line of the river. Vepsch would never have been able to reach. It is quite obvious that she was hopelessly late and could not even be a threat to the rear of the Polish strike group. This does not mean, of course, that information about the movement of the 1st Cavalry Army on August 11 to Sokal-Zamosc would not have affected the activities of the Polish command. But it is very difficult to admit that one of these measures would be the cancellation of the offensive of the 4th army. Along the way of its movement, the 1st Cavalry Army would meet, in addition to the Polish cavalry, the 3rd division of legionnaires on the Zamostye line, near Lublin - the 1st division of legionnaires, excellent in all respects, following to the place of concentration at Sedlice by rail. The Polish command could easily redirect and throw at Budyonny the 18th infantry division, which was also being transported these days by rail from near Lvov through Lublin to Warsaw. Let's not forget that by the evening of the 16th, the enemy could have concentrated the entire 2nd division of legionnaires in reserve in Ivangorod. In addition, one must also take into account other parts of the 3rd Polish ar

Lublin. By August 15, the 6th Ukrainian division was concentrated in Krasnostav, and the 7th division was concentrated at Kholm. In short, it is very difficult, almost completely impossible, to allow the Polish command, ignoring the calculation of time, space and its capabilities, to panic in refusing to develop a counterattack, which decided, as the last stake, the fate of Warsaw only under the influence of rumors about the movement of the Cavalry Army in the northwestern direction. One must think that even the force of the counterattack itself would not have suffered especially, because three divisions (14th, 16th and 21st) would directly launch it instead of four, as it actually was (if we discard the 1st division of legionnaires) . This would not change anything significantly, since the divisions of the Polish strike group from the beginning of the offensive "moved almost without contact with the enemy, since minor skirmishes in one place or another with some small groups that, at the slightest collision with us, scattered and ran away, cannot be called resistance "(here Alexander Ilyich quite appropriately quoted Pilsudski's book " 1920 " - **B.S.**).

Indeed, the earlier movement of the Budyonny army to Zamosc could only lead to the weakening of the Polish strike force by one division, which would still not prevent Pilsudski from defeating the troops of the Mozyr group and entering the flank of the armies of the Western Front. True, to be absolutely precise, the return of the 18th Polish division to the southwestern direction against the Cavalry would probably force the Polish command to abandon the counterattack in the north. However, firstly, in itself, this counterattack was not of decisive importance, and, secondly, Pilsudski could decide that the five infantry divisions already at hand (three divisions of legionnaires, the 7th Polish and 6th Ukrainian) and there will be enough cavalry to neutralize Budyonny, and continue the transfer of the 18th division to the 5th army. In any case, the First Cavalry would have been surrounded in the Zamosc region, as it actually happened during its raid on the 20th of August, and would not have been able to provide any significant assistance to the armies of Tukhachevsky in repelling the Polish counteroffensive.

Like the victory over Denikin near Orel and Voronezh, the defeat near Warsaw was predetermined not by the actions of the front commanders, but by the decisions of the high command of the Red Army.

Army and political leadership. In the first case, the correct plan, both militarily and politically, was adopted for a strike in converging directions under the base of the wedge of the Volunteer Army that protruded far to the north and a further offensive through the proletarian Donbass in order to separate the Donets and volunteers. In the second case, after the defeat of the Poles in Belarus, members of the Politburo overestimated the demoralization of the enemy and underestimated his ability to resist, as a result, making the wrong decision to attack in divergent directions towards Lvov and Warsaw. The Warsaw failure had no effect on the military

career of Yegorov, just like Tukhachevsky. After the conclusion of the Soviet-Polish truce in Riga on October 12, 1920, he continued to command the Southwestern Front, to which the 12th Army was returned from the Western Front. On November 10, 1920, after breaking through the Perekop fortifications of Wrangel, the commander-in-chief signed a directive to the Western and Southwestern fronts on the start of an offensive against the detachments of Petlyura in Ukraine and Bulak-Balakhovich and Savinkov in Belarus. These detachments were concentrated in the neutral zone established by the truce - the territory between the line of greatest advance of the Polish army and the line of the previously agreed Soviet-Polish border. S.S. Kamenev noted that "in the neutral zone, according to the agreement, there should be our administrative department" and that "the Polish command refused responsibility for Bulak-Balakhovich's troops and other anti-Soviet detachments operating in the neutral zone." Deprived of Polish support, the troops of the Ukrainian Army and the People's Volunteer Army of Bulak-Balakhovich were pushed back beyond the border line by the end of November. Egorov was ill all this time, having caught a severe cold in the poorly heated premises of the headquarters of the Southwestern Front in Kiev. In fact, the fighting was led by the chief of staff of the front, N.N. Petin. On December 30, 1920, taking into account "solid theoretical knowledge of military

affairs" and command of the fronts during the Civil War, the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic ranked Yegorov on the General Staff. And this is despite the fact that Alexander Ilyich never bothered to graduate from the Military Academy and no "solid

theoretical knowledge "in the field of military art, neither before nor after, did not show in any way. In any case, not a single military-theoretical work from the pen of Alexander Ilyich ever came out.

From January 21, Yegorov commanded the Kyiv military district, from April of the same year he took over the Petrograd district, whose troops had just suppressed the Kronstadt rebellion under the leadership of Tukhachevsky. At the same time, concurrently from September 21 to January 22, Yegorov commands the Western Front instead of Tukhachevsky, who was recalled for a while. On February 17, 1921, he was awarded the Honorary Revolutionary Arms. On February 22, as I have already said, Alexander Ilyich was sent to Transcaucasia, where he had to do the same thing that Tukhachevsky did in Kronstadt and the Tambov province. Egorov coped well with the craft of the punisher, fortunately, he had rich pre-revolutionary experience. As a result, to the two Orders of the Red Banner of the RSFSR, he added the Orders of the Red Banner of Georgia and Azerbaijan. From May 1924 he received a promotion - instead of Frunze, he became commander-in-chief of the troops of Ukraine and Crimea. In 1925, Yegorov was appointed military attache in China, to which the attention of the Soviet leadership was then riveted. It was expected that it was here that the fire of the world revolution could break out. Yegorov had to lead military advisers, including the future Marshal V.K. Blucher, who were with the National Revolutionary Army of the Kuomintang government in the south and with the National Armies of the north, also oriented towards the USSR. However, things did not work out in China. Yegorov failed to find a common language with either the commander of the Kuomintang troops, Marshal Chiang Kai-shek, or with the commander of the 1st National Army, Feng Yuxiang. Alexander Ilyich was recalled from military-diplomatic work in the spring of 1926. For a year and a half, he sat in the insignificant position of deputy chairman of the Military Industrial Directorate under the Supreme Council of the National Economy. In October 27, People's Commissar Voroshilov remembered his comrade-in-arms in the Tsaritsyn battles and appointed him commander of the troops of the Belarusian Military District. Yegorov remained in this post until April 1931, when he replaced Tukhachevsky at the head of the Red Army Headquarters. In 1929, near Bobruisk, Alexander Ilyich carried out great maneuvers. As he had to admit at a meeting of the Revolutionary Military Coun

in the course of them, a lack of "solid skills in organizing and managing large formations equipped with modern technology" was revealed. The former commander-in-chief, and at that time - deputy people's commissar of defense, S.S. Kamenev sharply criticized Yegorov for overestimating infantry training and underestimating the role of tanks and infantry mechanization in a future war. Sergei Sergeevich argued that "we failed with the marches at the Bobruisk maneuvers. Now, when artillery is getting more mobility, it is impossible to drive a tractor, a car and infantry in one column. Yegorov and Tukhachevsky, Uborevich, Yakir and Voroshilov himself criticized, but this did not affect the career of Alexander Ilyich in any way. Having become Chief of Staff of the Red Army, in 1934 he was elected at the 17th Party Congress as a candidate member of the Central Committee, and in the 35th he was awarded the rank of marshal. No special merit in the matter of increasing the combat capability and combat readiness of the troops and the introduction of new types of weapons was noticed for Egorov, but this was more than compensated by the patronage of Voroshilov. And Alexander Ilyich did not remain in debt. Here, for example, what congratulations to the Commissar of Defense on his 50th birthday he sent on February 15, 1931 from Germany, where he was sent for six months to study the military-technical and operational-tactical developments of the Reichswehr: "Dear Kliment Efremovich! From all the depths of my heart I send you, dear friend, comrade-in-arms and beloved Chief (that's right, with a capital letter! - **B.S.**) - leader, on the day of your glorious anniversary, the warmest congratulations. Of course, I would be infinitely glad to see you these days and personally express all those feelings that excite me as a child, connected with

After all, on your military and revolutionary path there were a lot of events and phenomena exceptional in their significance, and that they are now gaining even greater salience and standing up like giant giants, not only against the backdrop of the past truly stormy and heroic days of the Civil War, but also in the avenue of the upcoming future. , in the balance of which, as we know, there is a graph of the so-called "inevitable collisions". I say that, as a child, these days I have a special feeling of joy and, at the same time, pride. In fact, we are connected with you by the historical days of combat work. The entire era of the struggle in the south, against the main, in essence, forces of the entire Russian counter-revolution (Denikin and Wrangel),

and then the Polish campaign of 1920, took place with our (you, Semyon Mikhailovich Budyonny and I) joint and friendly combat participation.

With what delight I recalled this close joint combat work, which took place under the direct tactical leadership of our beloved leader Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin. When you consider that history, in order to solve its problems, will require more people capable of showing great qualities of mind, will, firmness, determination and selfless devotion to the cause of Lenin, and you know that our Soviet Union has such people, in the person of Joseph Vissarionovich and Kliment Efremovich, it becomes even more joyful, and cheerfulness, like a living stream, fills all the fibers of the body.

Is it not desirable on such days to be together and personally convey these sublime feelings and experiences. I do not have this opportunity, since I am, as they say, in der Fremde (in a foreign land). But, nevertheless, the work for which I am here in Germany convinces me and, one must think, it serves as a sufficient reason and justification for my personal absence. I wish you, dear Kliment Efremovich, long years and good health, so necessary for our valiant Red Army to grow and improve every year in all areas of its combat skills and, in the event of an armed clash under your tested leadership, crush any fierce enemy who encroached on the revolutionary rights and sovereignty of the Soviet Union. "Dear Kliment Efremovich" was greedy for flattery. "Lugansk locksmith Klim" should have felt his

importance especially when he was obsequiously praised by a former lieutenant colonel of the tsarist service. Yes, and a compliment to Stalin, as Alexander Ilyich hoped, Voroshilov would bring to the attention of the leader. Iosif Vissarionovich will be pleased to know that he carried out "tactical leadership" in the defeat of Denikin, that is, he explained to Yegorov how the infantry should advance, where the artillery should be located, etc. But still there was an unforgivable mistake in this letter. Stalin and Voroshilov should not have been put on the same level as two Soviet leaders capable of solving historical problems. Iosif Vissarionovich believed that there was only one such leader in the USSR. Yes, and knowledge of German was not worth demonstrating to the illiterate Voroshilov. "Dear friend" Kliment Efremovich could be offended.

In 1932, a group of employees of the Red Army Headquarters prepared a report "Tactics and operational art of the Red Army at a new stage." It is difficult to say what Yegorov's personal contribution was to the creation of this document. There were a lot of good ideas in there. For example, about the fact that tanks, aircraft and large-caliber artillery "make it possible to hit the enemy simultaneously at the entire depth of his location." Therefore, "the main problem of our time is the simultaneous deployment of hostilities to a greater depth. In tactics, its resolution is planned along the line of penetration to the entire depth of the enemy's defensive zone with the help of high-speed tanks, fighters, artillery, infantry transporters and ground attack aircraft. In operational art, this is achieved by deep access to the rear of the enemy or a breakthrough into this rear, if there are no open flanks, large masses of cavalry or motorized mechanized formations with the support of powerful aviation. In principle, everything is

correct. Unless the role of the cavalry, to please the people's commissar Voroshilov, was exaggerated. After all, already in the First World War, it became clear that on the battlefield, cut up by trenches, covered with barbed wire, saturated with guns and machine guns, the cavalry had nothing to do. But the main trouble was that the theses, which were true on paper, were put into practice very badly. Too many conventions were allowed at the exercises, and a potential enemy was forced to play giveaway.

When in May 37 Tukhachevsky was exiled to command the peripheral Volga Military District, Yegorov took over his post as First Deputy People's Commissar of Defense. In fact, Alexander Ilyich became the second person in the military nomenclature after Voroshilov. At the Military Council in early June, Yegorov, along with everyone else, branded the participants in the "military fascist conspiracy." He was one of the 42 members of the Council who spoke, not yet knowing that he would be among those 34 speakers who would

soon share the fate of Tukhachevsky. Alexander Ilyich reached the peak of his career and for some time lost his vigilance. I thought that since they put Tukhachevsky, the exposed "enemy of the people," in his place, it means that Yezhov has nothing against him and Stalin completely trusts him, Yegorov. It seemed that Alexander Ilyich was pleased with everything, but he had one grief in his heart. The marshal considered th

Denikin in the autumn of the 19th. Now Stalin was supposed to be considered the architect of this victory, and the name of Yegorov was only mentioned in the same row with Voroshilov and Budyonny.

In October 37, Alexander Ilyich was nominated as a candidate for deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR in the Vyazemsky constituency. Deciding that now there was nothing to be afraid of, Yegorov shared his pain with his old friends from the First Cavalry - Deputy People's Commissar of Defense for Human Resources E.A. Shchadenko and the head of the financial planning department of the Red Army A.V. Khrulev. This frankness turned out to be fatal for the marshal. Already in December 1937, shortly after Yegorov became a deputy of the Supreme Soviet and formally gained parliamentary immunity, the denunciations of Efim Afanasyevich and Andrei Vasilyevich lay on the table of Voroshilov. Two friends agreed that Yegorov, during a friendly dinner (they noted the appointment of Shchadenko as deputy people's commissar of defense, which followed at the end of November), expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that the history of the Civil War was covered incorrectly, his role, Yegorov, was belittled, and the role of Stalin and Voroshilov was "undeservedly exalted". Apparently, the military leaders drank too much that evening, Alexander Ilyich lost his vigilance, became deeply moved, and that's the result. The time after the Tukhachevsky case and the start of mass arrests in the army was troubling. Shchadenko and Khrulev might have thought with fright that Yegorov was provoking them in general. And they decided that in any case it was simply necessary to inform Voroshilov about the "ideologically inconsistent" conversation. Their denunciations were decisive in the fate of the marshal. But, in fairness, it must be admitted that these denunciations were not the first denunciations against Yegorov. The dubious priority here belongs to brigade commander Yan Matisovich Zhigur, a teacher at the Academy of the General Staff. On November 9, 1937, he wrote: "To the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, comrade.

Stalin. A number of the most important questions of the organization of the Red Army and the operational-strategic use of our Armed Forces, in my opinion, have been resolved erroneously, and possibly wreckingly. This in the first period of the war can lead to major setbacks and numerous unnecessary casualties.

I ask Comrade Stalin, to check the activities of Marshal Yegorov when he was chief of the General Staff of the Red Army, since he

actually bears responsibility for the mistakes made in the field of preparation for the operational-strategic use of our Armed Forces and their organizational structure. I am a political past and present comrade. I don't

know Yegorov, but his practical activities, as Chief of the General Staff,

raises doubts.

Member of the CPSU (b) since 1912 Y.

Zhigur. History is silent, because of which Yan Matisovich quarreled with Alexander Ilyich. I will only note that Zhigur's denunciation does not contain any specific data. In principle, such accusations could just as well be brought against any Chief of the General Staff of any army in the world. And depending on the attitude of the head of state towards the person involved in the denunciation, the question of his guilt could be resolved positively or negatively, completely regardless of the actual state of the armed forces. Zhigur's denunciation was clearly dictated by a personal dislike for Yegorov that had arisen from somewhere, and not by concern for maintaining the combat capability of the Red Army. Such "carts" in the 37th year came in abundance. If each of them were given a move, none of the leaders of the party, the army and the state would be left in the wild. It is quite possible that the Zhigurovsky denunciation of Yegorov would have remained without consequences, just as, for example, the denunciations of Budyonny and the numerous testimonies against Semyon Mikhailovich, just in case, knocked out by the Chekists from the arrested military leaders, did not lead to anything. But the denunciations of Shchadenko and Khrulev changed the situation. Stalin did not need the second highest position in the People's Commissariat of Defense, who harbored a grudge against him and Voroshilov for the 19th year. And the fate of Alexander Ilyich was sealed. Only the technical side of the question remained: how to formalize the case. Moreover, Iosif Vissarionovich, as it seems, did not have a very high opinion of Yegorov's military talents and promoted him only because of the marshal's personal devotion to him, Stalin, and Voroshilov. The last straw that undermined Alexander Ilyich's chances for salvation was the denunciation of the head of the Borisoglebsk-Leningrad cavalry school, brigade commander Georgy

Vasilyevich Zhukov, a member of the CPSU (b) since 1917. Here is his text:

"TO THE PEOPLE'S COMMISSAR OF DEFENSE OF THE UNION OF THE SSR

comrade. VOROSHILOV. The discovery of vile, treacherous, vile work in the ranks of the Red Army obliges all of us to check and remember all the struggle that we, under the leadership of the LENIN-STALIN party, carried out for 20 years. Check with the fact that we all marched sincerely honestly in the struggle for the cause of the LENIN-STALIN party, as befits a Party and non-Party Bolshevik, and whether there are any fellow travelers among us who have come and go for the sake of a careerist, and perhaps another, wrecking spy target. Guided by these considerations,

I decided to tell Comrade TYULENEV the following fact, which today I consider

having political significance.

In November 1917, at the Congress of the 1st Army in Shtokmashof, where I was a delegate, I heard the speech of the then Right Socialist-Revolutionary, Lieutenant Colonel A.I. Ultimately, his speech boiled down to the fact that the soldiers did not believe LENIN as a revolutionary fighter fighting for the liberation of the working class and peasantry.

After his speech, the Menshevik spoke, who, despite on hostility to the Bolsheviks, even dissociated himself from his speech.

Dear Comrade People's Commissar, it may be too late, but after talking with Comrade TYULENEV today, I decided to tell you this. MEMBER OF THE

AUCP(b) (G. ZHUKOV)." In fairness,

I note that this letter, received by Voroshilov's office on January 26, 1938, no longer significantly affected the fate of Yegorov. It's just that Kliment Efremovich and Iosif Vissarionovich were once again convinced of the insincerity of their colleague in Tsaritsyn and could strengthen their intention to deal with him. It turned out that even at the congress of the 1st Army, which opened on October 30, 1917, four days after the victory of the Bolshevik revolution in Petrograd, Alexander Ilyich stood on the defensive, right-wing Socialist-Revolutionary positions, and did not adjoin the left wing of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, then leaning towards the Bolsheviks. Fate

Egorova was identified just on the eve of Zhukovsky's admission

denunciation. On January 25, 1938, the Politburo and the Council of People's Commissars adopted a special resolution, which stated: "First Deputy People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR Comrade Egorov A.I. during his tenure as Chief of Staff of the Red Army, he worked extremely unsatisfactorily, ruined the work of the General Staff, entrusting it to hardened spies of the Polish, German and Italian intelligence services, Levichev and Mezheninov. The Council of People's Commissars of the USSR and the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks consider it suspicious that Comrade Yegorov not only did not try to control Levichev and Mezheninov, but had unlimited trust in them, was on friendly terms with them .

T. Egorov, as can be seen from the testimony of the arrested spies Belov, Grinko, Orlov and others, obviously knew something about the conspiracy existing in the army, which was headed by spies Tukhachevsky, Gamarnik and other scoundrels from former Trotskyists, Right Socialist Revolutionaries, white officers and etc. Judging by these materials, Comrade Yegorov tried to establish contact with the conspirators through Tukhachevsky, as Belov, a spy from the Socialist-Revolutionaries, says in his testimony. T. Yegorov, unreasonably, not content with his position in the Red Army, knowing something about

the conspiratorial groups existing in the army, decided to organize his own anti-Party group, in which he involved comrade Dybenko and tried to involve comrade Budyonny in it.

On the basis of all the specified Council of People's Commissars of the USSR and the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks decide:

1. To recognize as impossible the further abandonment of Comrade Egorov A.I. in leadership work in the central apparatus of the People's Commissariat of Defense due to the fact that he cannot enjoy the full political confidence of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR.

2. Release comrade Yegorov from his job as Deputy People's Commissar for Defense.
3. To consider it possible, as a last education, to give Comrade Yegorov the job of commander of one of the non-basic military districts. Invite Comrade Voroshilov to submit to the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR his proposals on the work of Comrade Yegorov.

4. The question of the possibility of leaving Comrade Egorov as a candidate member of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks to be discussed

Plenum of the Central Committee of the

CPSU (b). 5. Send this resolution to all members of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and commander of the military districts.

The decree was signed by Stalin and Molotov, as chairman of the Council of People's Commissars. Strange ruling! If a person is convicted of trying to organize an anti-Party group, then why is he not expelled from the Party and arrested (in 1938 it is hard to imagine otherwise), and as the last test they are given the opportunity to command a military district, even if it is not the main one? The thing is that both Molotov and Stalin knew perfectly well that no Egorov was an enemy, and they were going to deal with him for something else - for what Alexander Ilyich inadvertently mentioned in a conversation with Shchadenko and Khrulev. Basically, the decision, by the way, repeated the accusations contained in Zhigur's denunciation. Only in the words about Yegorov's dissatisfaction with his position in the Red Army was there a hidden hint at the real reason for the disgrace - Yegorov's critical attitude towards exalting the role of Stalin and Voroshilov in the Civil War.

It is worth saying that the fate of some of those who reported on Yegorov was not very successful. Zhigur was arrested and shot in the 38th, so that the marshal even briefly outlived one of his killers. Zhukov was lucky enough to die a natural death, but during the Great Patriotic War he was also arrested and spent several years in the Gulag. Only Shchadenko and Khrulev safely passed all the waves of repression. Alexander Ilyich was appointed to command the Transcaucasian Military District. By the way, this is another indirect evidence that Stalin and Voroshilov did not consider the marshal a real conspirator.

The district is borderline, and what, one wonders, would prevent the enemy of the people, who is afraid of exposure, from trying to cross the Turkish border? On February 4, 1938, Yegorov arrived at the district headquarters in Tbilisi. Four days later, on February 8, Marshal's wife Galina Antonovna Tseshkovskaya was arrested in Moscow. Based on her last name, Yezhov's people accused her of spying for Poland. Meanwhile, the Tseshkovskys were connected with Poland only by a very distant origin. After all, the grandfather of Galina Antonovna Nikanor Tseshkovsky was an Orthodox priest. But after a week of intense interrogation, she confessed to being a longtime

Polish intelligence agent Testimony against Yegorov was also extorted from the arrested army commanders I.P. Belova, N.D. Kashirina, A.I. Sedyakin, commander I.K. Gryaznov and one of the defendants in the process of the "right-wing Trotskyist bloc" of the former People's Commissar for Finance of the USSR G.F. Grinko. All of them stated that Alexander Ilyich was the head of a right-wing military group that acted in contact with the participants in Tukhachevsky's "military-fascist conspiracy". The point here was not in some special sympathy for Yegorov for Bukharin or Yagoda, but in the fact that they tried to make the marshal join the next political process - over the "right-wing Trotskyist bloc", which opened in Moscow on March 2, 1938.

On February 21, Voroshilov summoned Yegorov to Moscow by telegram. Here, Alexander Ilyich, who had not yet been arrested and remained a candidate member of the Central Committee, but who was already under the hood of the NKVD at a dacha in Sosny, and then in a sanatorium in Arkhangelsk, was given confrontations with Belov, Kashirin, Sedyakin, Gryaznov and Grinko. All of them, with the exception of Kashirin, obediently confirmed Yegorov's involvement in the anti-Soviet organization of the right. Only Nikolai Dmitrievich found the courage on February 26, before the confrontation in the presence of Voroshilov and Molotov, to renounce his testimony and declare that false confessions were obtained from all arrested commanders by torture and torture. Kashirin claimed that he himself had never been a member of any anti-Soviet organization and warned: "Do not believe anything, whatever I write in my further testimony." In 1939, the arrested former first deputy Yezhov, commander of the 1st rank M.P. Frinovsky told the investigators how Kashirin behaved before the confrontation with Yegorov: "It was decided to confront a number of those arrested who testified against Yegorov, in particular Kashirin and Yegorov, who had not yet been arrested. This confrontation was to be conducted by Yezhov in the presence of Molotov and Voroshilov in Yezhov's office. Kashirin was the first to be called. Egorov was already sitting in his office. When Kashirin entered and saw Yegorov, he asked to be heard beforehand without Yegorov. Yegorov was asked to leave, and Kashirin stated that they had given evidence against Yegorov under the physical influence of the investigation, in particular Ushakov, who was here.

After the failed confrontation with Yegorov, the "physical impact" on Kashirin was continued with even greater intensity. On April 3, 1938, Nikolai Dmitrievich was forced to write a letter to Yezhov, where he called his statement at a confrontation with Yegorov provocative. Kashirin said: "More than a month has passed since the moment when I on February 26 this year. made you and the People's Commissar of Defense of the Soviet Union, Marshal Voroshilov K.E., who is in your office. provocative statement aimed at discrediting the NKVD. My provocative statement that I am not a participant in the conspiracy, and that there is a dungeon in the NKVD, in which many innocent commanders are kept, was not accidental and unexpected. I came to the following main decisions: a) to say about myself that I was not a participant in the counter-revolutionary conspiracy, and to renounce all my past testimony and thereby discredit it; b) to say that the NKVD arrested many innocent commanders who, allegedly under the influence of repression, give false testimony to each other. In this direction, I approximately made my vile provocative statement to you and the People's Commissar of Defense Voroshilov. Yegorov, still hoping for salvation, on February 28 wrote a desperate letter to Voroshilov, where he

assured "friend Klim" of his own reliability: "I presented you my conclusions on the main issues that were raised at a confrontation with me by enemies of the people. With all the depth of my responsibility for myself, for my actions and behavior, I report again and again that my political base, on the basis of which I have lived for the past 20 years, I live now and will live until the end of my life, is ours. the great party LENIN-STALIN, its principles, foundations and general course. During all these 20 years, carrying out all the tasks of the Party and fighting for their implementation, I have not had a single cloud that would cause any

slightest doubt, and even more wavering, regarding the correctness of the tasks of the Party and criticism of the leadership. It never happened, and no one dares to say otherwise. My attitude to the tasks of the Red Army and my attitude to the leadership of the army in your person was and was based on the same foundations. I with all my determination

I emphasize and declare, no matter how and no matter what the traitors and spies say about this issue with regard to me.

I am not sinless. I admit that both I and I were told about certain aspects of practical work. But in all decisiveness I will say that I would immediately cut the throat of anyone who dares to speak and call for a change in leadership. My political base has remained and remains unshakable. My political face has not been spattered with a single drop of dirt and remains clean, as it has been throughout the 20 years of my stay in the ranks of the Party and the Red Army. Based on this consciousness, it is all the more difficult to experience the whole situation that has developed in relation to me. The severity of the experiences was even more aggravated when I learned about the exceptional meanness and treason on the part of my ex-wife, for which I bear the greatest moral

responsibility.

Dear Kliment Efremovich! I am experiencing an exceptionally severe moral depression. I know and realize that the testimonies of the enemies of the people, despite their blatant vileness and slander, must be carefully checked. But I cannot fail to mention one thing, namely: of course, the Party must receive exhaustive data for the final decision of my fate. The decision will be the result of an analysis of the testimony of the enemies of the people against me and an analysis of my personality, in the aggregate of all my personal properties.

If I had behind me, on my conscience and soul, at least one iota of my guilt in relation to political ties with a gang of enemies and traitors to the Party, the Motherland and the people, I would not only now, but even in the first minutes when the Party, through the mouth of the leader, Comrade STALIN announced that those who confessed would not be punished, and even without this, directly and frankly stated this, first of all, to Comrade STALIN and to you. But after all, there is no fact itself for recognition, there are no questions of my political guilt before the party and the Motherland as their enemy, traitor and traitor. I

can and must be punished for shortcomings, misdeeds, oversights, negligence in my practical work, for political blindness and idleness, for the lack of proper class and revolutionary vigilance. I can and must be punished for my narrow-mindedness, unworthy of a true Bolshevik. around which a gang of criminals and spies was operating. It's all undeniable and it's me

I fully acknowledge. But for myself, I cannot admit the existence of any political connection with enemies, traitors and spies, since such has never existed, no matter what and no matter what these enemies say. This is a particularly difficult thing to worry about, and I would, without hesitation, directly and openly, raise this question and declare it to our Party and to you, if it were in nature and behind me in any form and volume. It was not, is not and never can be. To this I swear again with the whole being of my life.

Dear Kliment Efremovich! I

submitted a note to STALIN with a request to receive me at least for a few minutes during this exceptional period in my life. No answer. I want to tell him in a personal conversation that all that bright past, our joint work at the front, remains for me the most precious moment of my life and that I have never allowed anyone to denigrate this past, and even more so I have not allowed and cannot allow that I although in his thoughts he could change this past and become not only in deed, but also in thoughts an enemy of the party and the people. I ask you, Kliment Efremovich, to assist in receiving me Comrade. STALIN. All the weight of my experience would immediately fall like a mountain from my shoulders.

I want, I desperately need moral reassurance, what you always get from a conversation with Comrade. STALIN.

Once again I declare to you, as my immediate superior, comrade-in-arms during the Civil War and old friend (as you put it in your greeting on the occasion of my fiftieth birthday), that my political honesty is unshakable both to the party and to the people.

At this stage, Alexander Ilyich, apparently, had not yet been acquainted with the denunciations of Zhigur, Shchadenko Khrulev and Zhukov, and he was at a loss to guess what caused the sudden disfavor. Probably, Voroshilov showed Yegorov's letter to Stalin, and together they only laughed when they read the marshal's confessions of unshakable loyalty to the party and leadership. Iosif Vissarionovich and Kliment Efremovich knew well that the only thing the marshal was constant in was the desire to make a career, and for this he always joined the winners. So back in November 17th, he scolded Lenin as a German spy, in order to later swear allegiance to the Lenin-Stalin party,

so he joined the Left SRs when they became the ruling party in order to break with them in July 18, when the Left SR leaders were forever deprived of access to power. And as for the fact that Egorov had no intention of betraying the glorious past, Stalin and Voroshilov even did not believe. After all, they knew from Khrulev and Shchadenko how Alexander Ilyich honored high-ranking comrades-in-arms in "joint combat work" in a private conversation.

Yegorov seemed to guess that some kind of careless conversation could be the reason for the disgrace. Therefore, he said or heard something not very restrained, not quite party-like. But it is unlikely that the marshal sinned precisely against Shchadenko and Khrulev. Otherwise, I would have guessed that it was already useless to write letters to old friends Kliment Efremovich and Iosif Vissarionovich, that it would not be possible to get off with a small punishment - withdrawal from the Central Committee, appointment to a secondary district - "for philistine" (this vague term meant that he did not see the spy in hot beloved wife). So Alexander Ilyich hastened to call Galina Antonovna his former wife, renounced her, if only to save his own skin, did not

save. Voroshilov did not answer Yegorov. Stalin answered. On February 28 - March 2, 1938, a special resolution on Yegorov was adopted by a poll of members of the Politburo: one could think up to a confrontation, and, taking into account that his wife, nee Tseshkovskaya, with whom Comrade Egorov lived in perfect harmony, turned out to be a long-standing Polish spy, as is clear from her own testimony, the Central Committee of the CPSU (b) recognizes it necessary exclude comrade Yegorov from the list of candidates for membership in the Central Committee." Under this resolution is the signature of Stalin as secretary of the Central Committee. On the same day, March 2, he received

Yegorov's letter. The marshal begged for mercy and swore his own devotion to the Motherland, the party and personally to Joseph Vissarionovich: "I declare to the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, the Politburo, as the highest conscience of our party, and to you, comrade. Stalin, as a leader, father and teacher, and I swear on my life that if I had even one iota of guilt in my political complicity with the enemies of the people, I would not only

now, and in the first days of the discovery of a gang of criminals and traitors to the Motherland, he would come to the Politburo and to you personally, first of all, with a guilty head in his crimes and would confess to everything.

But I have no guilt for myself, on my conscience and soul before the Party and the Motherland, as well as before the Red Army, the guilt that I am their enemy, traitor and traitor.

But once again, with all sincerity, I report and ask the Politburo and you, comrade. Stalin, believe me that I personally have never been in any political connection with any of the criminal gang of enemies of the people, traitors and traitors to the Motherland and spies, and all 20 years of being in the ranks of the party and the Red Army I have always been a faithful and devoted son and a fighter of our great party of Lenin-Stalin, our mighty motherland, our valiant Red Army and our people." "Father and teacher" did not

believe in the sincerity of the marshal. Iosif Vissarionovich could not forget that Yegorov doubted his military merits. The leader did not forgive such doubts.

The next day, March 3, after reading the decision of the Central Committee, Alexander Ilyich wrote another letter to Voroshilov, the last one. And for some reason he put the stamp "top secret" on the letter. Egorov talked about the difficult situation he was in and asked for help: "Dear Kliment Efremovich! I have just

received a decision on exclusion

from the list of candidates for membership in the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks. I recognize this most difficult political decision of the Party for me as absolutely and the only correct one, for this is required by the unshakable authority of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks as the leading organ of our great party. This is the law and the immutable foundation. I am fully aware of all this with my mind

and understanding of the Party essence of the decision. You will forgive me, Kliment Efremovich, that I annoy you with my letters. But I hope you understand the exceptional gravity of my experience, which is made up of two positions that are completely different in

their essence. Firstly, the unimaginable and indescribable situation that has developed around me of political soiling of me by enemies of the people and, secondly, the murderous fact of a flagrant crime against

The birthplace of my ex-wife. If the second, i.e., the betrayal of my ex-wife, is an indisputable fact, then the first, i.e., the political soiling of me by enemies and traitors of the people, is completely inexplicable, and I have the right to call it the tragic case of my life.

How to explain this monstrous situation that has developed around me, when there is no political basis for it and there has never been such a case that anyone called me, or in my presence, to speak out against the leadership of the party, the Soviet government and the Red Army, i.e. . recruited as a conspirator, enemy and traitor.

In all my 20 years of work, I have never heard such appeals and proposals from anyone, anywhere. I declare that anyone who would dare to propose to me an act of such betrayal would be immediately handed over by me into the hands of our organs of the NKVD, and this would be my first priority and, first of all, reported to you. Each of the gang of enemies and traitors of the people knew about this attitude, and none of them dared to make me a single such proposal during my entire 20-year period of work.

Dear Kliment Efremovich! I spent all 20 years in the ranks of our native Red Army, starting from the first days of its inception at the front in 1917. I spent years of exceptional heroic struggle in its ranks, where I spared neither strength nor my life, firmly embarking on the path The Soviet government, after breaking irrevocably with the past of my life (officer environment, populist ideology and absolutely any connection, with anyone, from non-Soviet elements or organizations), tore and burned all the bridges and bridges, and there is no that power which could bring me back to these old and dead people for me and their positions. In this I am also absolutely sinless and pure in front of the Party and the Motherland. You, Kliment Efremovich, are a witness of my work on the fronts and devotion to Soviet power, and I turn to the leader of our party, the teacher of my political youth in the ranks of our party, comrade Stalin, and I dare to believe that he will not refuse to testify to this my devotion to the cause of Soviet power . The blood I shed in the ranks of the Red Army in the fight against enemies on the battlefield forever soldered me to the October Revolution and our great party. Is it really now, in the days of victories and the triumph of socialism, that I have slipped into the abyss of betrayal and betrayal of my

To the motherland and my people, betrayal of the cause to which, from the moment I recognized Soviet power, I gave all of myself - my strength, mind, conscience and life. No, it never has been and never will be.

I am ashamed, dear Kliment Efremovich, to apply again and urge you to believe my statement. But, not finding any guilt before the Party, the Motherland and the people in the fact that I was in any degree an enemy, a traitor and a traitor before them, I dare to swear before the Party, before Comrade Stalin and before you at the cost of my life around me (in addition to the betrayal of my ex-wife, for which I bear exceptional moral guilt), an inexplicable tragic situation has been created in which I am dying, innocent in any degree before the party, Motherland and people in the matter of treason as their enemy and traitor..."

Kliment Efremovich was not going to vouch for Alexander Ilyich at all, just as Iosif Vissarionovich was in no hurry to testify to Yegorov's devotion to Soviet power. Even in this desperate letter, the marshal habitually lied about the first stages of his biography. In particular, he spoke about his adherence in the past to the "populist", i.e., Socialist-Revolutionary, ideology, supporting the legend of many years of membership in the Socialist-Revolutionary Party.

Yegorov continued to hope that his old friends from Tsaritsyn would not ruin him. And when, after being expelled from the Central Committee, Alexander Ilyich was left free for another three and a half weeks, he began to believe that everything would work out. The arrest was all the more shocking for the marshal.

He was taken on March 27, 1938. It is possible that Yegorov was presented with the denunciations of Shchadenko and Khrulev, and he realized that there was no mistake in the arrest and that Voroshilov and Stalin had now become his enemies. In any case, Alexander Ilyich did not lock himself up and obediently gave the testimony that the investigators dictated to him. He dutifully denounced both the already arrested commanders of the Red Army and those who still remained at large in treason and betrayal. Former NKVD officer Kazakevich, who participated in the investigation of his Rovsky case, reported in 1955 that Yezhov promised to save the marshal's life if he gave truthful testimony and revealed the criminal activities of other conspirators. Alexander Ilyich, it seems, believed, perhaps again remembering Stalin's thesis that "those who confess will not be punished." Egorov himself wrote

very detailed testimony, but Yezhov was probably not going to keep his promise. And how could he save Yegorov from execution if the case of Yegorov was initiated by Stalin himself. Moreover, just during the investigation of this case, in November 38, Nikolai Ivanovich was removed from the post of People's Commissar of Internal

Affairs. On February 22, 1939, Yegorov appeared before the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court. Alexander Ilyich was sentenced to death. His guilt in the verdict was determined as follows: "Egorov was found guilty of having joined the Communist Party with a double-dealing goal in 1919 and established criminal connections with: Kamenev S.S. and Lebedev P.P. (with the Commander-in-Chief and Chief of Staff of the Red Army. - **B.S.**), as well as with Trotsky, on whose instructions he tried to disrupt the implementation of Stalin's plan to defeat Denikin. In 1920 he prepared a terrorist act against Stalin. In 1928, having established anti-Soviet ties with Rykov and Bubnov, on their instructions, he created an anti-Soviet terrorist organization of the right in the Red Army. In subsequent years, Yegorov established contacts on anti-Soviet work with Tukhachevsky and Gamarnik. In 1931, while studying in Germany, he established espionage connections with the German General Staff, and in 1934, on the instructions of Rykov, he became a spy for Polish intelligence.

Here is the standard "gentleman's set" of accusations: conspiracy, preparation of an assassination attempt on the leader, spying for potential opponents - Poland and Germany, fortunately, Yegorov's wife was declared a Polish spy even earlier, and he himself visited Germany. They did not make Alexander Ilyich a Chinese spy, even though he was a military attache under the Kuomintang government. And it's quite understandable why. Indeed, in the late 30s, Chiang Kai-shek turned out to be a Soviet ally against Japan, and Stalin did not need to make the executed military imaginary agents of Chinese intelligence. The original point of Yegorov's

accusation was the plan to defeat Denikin. Now Alexander Ilyich not only ceased to be a co-author and executor of this plan, but in general turned into a malicious saboteur who tried to prevent the implementation of Stalin's brilliant plan. So Iosif Vissarionovich took revenge on Yegorov for careless boasting in front of Shchadenko and Khrulev. As for